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ABSTRACT

This guide for choosing humane children's books (i.e., books in which animals are not eaten, expolited, or treated with cruelty) presents reviews of over 100 books for children up to age 7. Both subtle and blatant examples of animal exploitation portrayed in children's picture books are examined. Reviews are grouped into 3 categories: kind books, nice books, and cruel books. The section on cruel books cites various categories of books and specific titles to avoid, based on the author's vegetarian-oriented opinion of what constitutes cruelty. An adult reading list is included that lists 12 books on various aspects of animal welfare and refers readers to various animal protection organizations for further information. Although most books were published between the 1960's and 1980's, many selections are older books that are widely available today. The document concludes with an updated supplement containing 25 additional books reviewed since January 1983. (LH)

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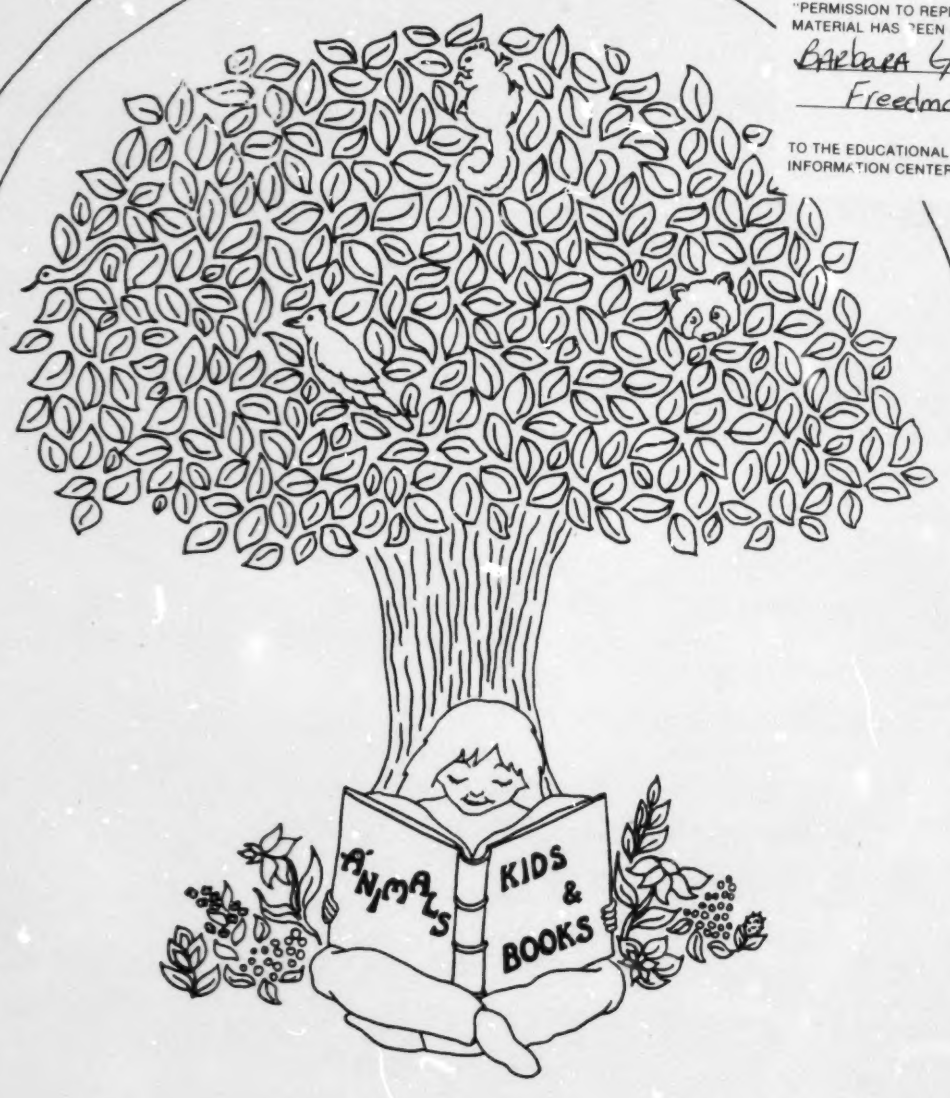

A GUIDE FOR PUTTING HUMANE BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN

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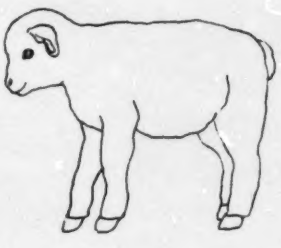

by Barbara Freedman © 1983

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The future of animals ultimately lies in the hands of each generation's children, as they will be the next generation's adults. Anyone who is concerned with the exploitation of animals and wants the next generation to grow with more compassionate views toward animals than most adults currently display, should be aware of the contents of children's picture books. These are books geared to children up to about the age of seven. Even if you have no contact with children, you have a stake in this issue and I particularly hope that a discussion of the attitudes toward animals reflected in picture books can assist parents, teachers, librarians, and any other adults who may be in the position of putting books into the hands of children.

If you have despaired at what you have found in perusing the children's shelves of libraries and bookstores, you are not alone. I will try to help you locate books that teach children valuable humane lessons or books that at least do not do harm by perpetuating stereotypical images of human/animal relations. For several years I have been working in the children's departments of public libraries and I have read hundreds of picture books in the planning of my storytelling sessions. I am also aware of what other library workers use in their story hours and I notice what parents pick out to read to their children in the library and to take home.

Most adults would not think of consciously condoning blatant cruelties to animals (though they do participate in the exploitation of animals in their daily consumer habits by eating meat, wearing leather, and using animal-tested cosmetics, etc.). Yet, I have seen many choose horrifying books for their small children, either because they have not reviewed the books beforehand, or (more likely) because they are not making any connection between literary fantasy and the reality which it may disguise. I have been appalled at the callous and exploitive attitudes that are displayed in children's literature, from the simplest of picture books to full-length children's novels (including some of the most popular and enduring titles). The majority of picture books portray unenlightened attitudes and some contain actual violence toward animal characters.

Many people may assume that, because I am discussing simple books, the contents are harmless; they are merely pleasant and entertaining little adventure tales filled with bright colors and fanciful designs. But young children take their cues on acceptable behavior from all sources to which they are exposed. That means that they may be internalizing attitudes on many subjects from parents, peers, teachers, television,... and books. Small children are not in a position to question what is presented to them. They will accept what they see as fact; they have no reason not to. They synthesize society's attitudes and life styles; this includes absorbing acceptable standards on how to interact with other humans and with animals.

In speaking to youngsters, I have seen what a thorough job of value transmission society is doing. Most children cannot understand why I question our many uses of animals. Even when I teach my humane education course, attended only by children (age seven to thirteen) with an interest in animals, the degree to which these attitudes are ingrained is clear. Their outrage will be aroused over the cruelties that I discuss with them, but most will still make casual statements on other uses of animals by humans. This indicates that they cannot generalize to an overall concept of animal rights. This is not simply due to their young age. Time after time I have seen the same incongruities in adults. They may agree that, for example, harp seal clubbing is untenable, yet refuse to acknowledge cruelties which they financially support on a routine basis, such as the meat and cosmetics industries. The belief in man's domination over other life forms gradually penetrates into the core of children's assumptions about the lives of animals.

These assumptions are transmitted in many forms. The form that concerns us here is books. Sadly, storybooks express low standards for human behavior toward animals. There are some stories that teach kindness toward our fellow beings, but more actually teach an opposite lesson, and the majority subtly foster indifference to cruelty. The overwhelming attitude expressed in children's literature is that animals exist for our use, indeed they love to serve us.

Let me give an example of an early source of such an attitude. It consists of a series of picture books that were written about forty years ago but are still a huge favorite with kids, parents, and librarians. Do you remember loving Curious George[1] when you were a child ? Curious George looks cute and happy and he just loves his owner, the "man with the yellow hat". But... stop and think of reality's counterparts to the story. How does a living monkey feel being captured in the jungle and losing the security of his mother ? How does he feel being shipped across the ocean under stressful and possibly dangerous conditions ? (In reality many creatures do not survive these trips due to stressful conditions such as overcrowding, temperature fluctuations, lack of ventilation, and other forms of abuse and neglect.[2]) How does he feel being confined in a cage devoid of any semblance of his former life ? Try to imagine the terror in that baby

monkey's face. I always picture the terrorized infant monkeys in Harry F. Harlow's surrogate mother experiments.[3] This, unfortunately, is the real picture. Children need not be force-fed these facts, but they also should not be taught distortions that allow them to grow up ignorant of animal suffering and apathetic to it. The world of the present and of the future needs all the caring people that it can get.

The preceding may sound melodramatic, until you read about the realities of captive animals' lives. Look at photographs of the actual farms, hunts, circuses, and zoos that provide so many "cute" settings for children's stories. Then look at those stories. They seem to come from two different worlds. Be aware of what these books are saying from a humane standpoint. I would advise adults to read any early childhood book carefully before deciding to share it with a child. It is one more step in raising thoughtful, humane children.

The remainder of this booklet consists of reviews of children's books. I do not attempt to present an authoritative list of titles; instead I offer samples as way of introduction to the issue of animal portrayals in picture books. Many of my selections are old books that are widely available today. Some are recent but obscure books that reveal surprising sensitivity. Most are still in print, as signified by the "BIP" following the bibliographic information. This means that they appear in Books in Print 1982-1983 (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1982). Those that are out of print should still be available at public libraries. Any mention of books receiving Caldecott Medals has been verified in Irene Smith's A History of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals (New York: Viking, 1957) and by information from the Children's Book Council, Inc. (67 Irving Place, New York, New York 10003). Any factual information on animal issues appearing within a review is footnoted at the end of the review.

It should be kept in mind that, where animal treatment is concerned, many times an individual author has written positive books as well as negative books. My inclusion of one book by an author in no way recommends all the author's works; judge each book separately. My reviews reflect my own opinions on what constitutes cruelty. Also, because I am hoping that this booklet will be used by people unaware of animal issues as well as those knowledgeable and active in the animal rights movement, my reviews point out all manner of animal exploitation from blatant violence to more subtle inclusions of meat eating in book illustrations. In this way, people anywhere along the spectrum will know if a book is appropriate for their use. For those who are interested in learning more about animal rights issues, the final page of this booklet lists a few factual adult books on various aspects of animal welfare and the footnotes include the addresses of some animal organizations. (You might want to encourage your library to order some humane materials for their adult departments.)

My reviews are divided into three groups :

Group 1 : KIND BOOKS are some of the best in preschool tales, those that actually promote kindness and reflection on the subject of human/animal relationships. Regrettably, I have the fewest titles to choose from in this category.

Group 2 : NICE BOOKS presents a sampling of pleasant stories dealing with animals. A large percentage of picture books involve nonhuman characters and here I discuss some that are neither consciously fostering humaneness nor portraying cruelty. (In certain cases, however, I point out conflicting elements that exist side by side within one book.) Most of these animal stories contain nothing objectionable and children may identify with the central characters. Therefore children may benefit from the positive feelings of the writers toward their characters, though some may be highly anthropomorphized.

This last point necessitates a brief digression on the subject of anthropomorphism. Animal rights/welfare advocates are often branded "Bambi-ites" and accused of anthropomorphizing animals. I feel that animals do express many of the same feelings that we do (fear, pain, enjoyment, lonliness, boredom, confusion, excitement). And I feel that the more we can openly admit our kinship to other creatures and look at our similarities, then the more we can imagine ourselves enduring their suffering, the more we can identify with and be moved by their position under our dominance, and the sooner that position can change.

Every species has its special advantage : its speed, its camouflage, its teeth, its claws. We have our brains. Does that distinction present a sound reason for us to isolate ourselves from other animals and deny our relationship to them ? Anthropomorphism in stories can help children relate to animals and, thus, care about them.

One element that frequently shows up on anthropomorphized animals, and bears discussion is clothing. I hate to see incidences of humans dressing animals in little clothes. However, in many picture books, no humans exist. (Within the context of the stories, no humans are doing anything "to" the animals.) There may be animals in clothing inhabiting their own houses or towns where, in effect, they are the humans. If I dismissed all of these stories, there would be few books left to give to small children. Thus, I include them. I feel that, as children mature, they can be taught about animals' dignity and animals' natural lives, but, at so young an age, a tale in which rabbits or

turtles are the people can help soften the dividing line between "human" and "animal" in a child's mind. That early empathy may lay important groundwork for their future respect for animals.

Group 3 : CRUEL BOOKS covers some of the most flagrant examples of cruelty that I have come across. I include them to demonstrate the extremity of the situation. I do not exaggerate when I talk about "horrors" in these books. They are definitely to be avoided, but, sadly, many are incredibly popular and are librarians' favorites.

Perhaps, someday, such a category will be unnecessary. For now, we can encourage our libraries to buy more books of quality. I do not advocate removal of the offensive ones because I cannot condone censorship, for however noble a purpose. My hope is that with public education and a concurrent increase in the availability of more sensitive literature for children, in time there will be no demand for the callous books. There is a chance that, in the near future, Curious George will be seen the way The Story of Little Black Sambo[4] is seen today. After all, that too was once viewed as an innocent children's story.

You may not agree with some of my reviews, but I hope that they will encourage you to dig further and examine any children's books that you come across. The most benign book titles may mask pages of animal suffering or neglect presented as normal or even as funny. Animals, and kids, deserve better.

KIND BOOKS

Baylor, Byrd. THE DESERT IS THEIRS. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975, BIP.*

This is an exquisite book with illustrations by the talented Peter Parnall. It explains why various beings would choose to live in so harsh an environment as a desert, among cactuses, parched sands, and heat. The Papago Indians' love of the desert is so great that they would not leave it in exchange for flowers and greenery. They have a deep commitment to the land and believe that the animals deserve the humans' respect. "Papagos try not to anger their animal brothers... They say, 'We share... we only share.'" Examples are given, of the deer and the children enjoying the same berries, doves and children sharing the same fruit, lizards and men gathering housing materials from the same ground. And with water so scarce for them all, every form of life in the desert must be patient : "A weed may wait three years to bloom. Just so it blooms sometime..."

The Desert Is Theirs is beautifully phrased. It strikes a chord and can be good for children in so many ways : in setting forth a policy of peaceful coexistence with the environment, and in arguing for the view of animals as fellow beings on this planet, rather than as lower beings existing for our exploitation. It also elucidates the beauty of the desert, an environment unfamiliar to most of us and seemingly hostile to life, and it gives us insights into the lives and legends of a group of people we may know nothing about.

I have read of Indian philosophies that are in harmony with nature. This does not mean that they never kill, but they certainly treat plant and animal life with more respect than do industrial societies, and they should be emulated. But Native Americans have been systematically destroyed and maligned, so it is good to see a book for young children that presents the Indian perspective on the world, not as saints, not as savages, simply as a group of people. Happily, this book was a Caldecott Honor book, as was the following book by the team of Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall.

In Hawk, I'm Your Brother (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976, BIP), an Indian boy steals a young hawk from its nest, thinking that he will somehow capture its ability to fly, as well. But he knows that the bird is unhappy being caged or having a string tied to its foot, this hawk with the "... sky reflected in his eyes..." So finally the boy sets him free and as the hawk soars, the message is clear; the hawk belongs in the wild.

The only Byrd Baylor book I've seen which involves humans using animals is Coyote Cry (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1972, BIP) which is about shepherds and their dogs. Preview all her other books, for among them you may find some of the most beautiful and moving children's books around.

* BIP = appears in Books in Print 1982-1983 (New York: R.R.Bowker Company, 1982)
OP = out of print

Bradbury, Peggy. THE SNAKE THAT COULDN'T SLITHER. New York: G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1976, OP.

Syd Hoff's drawings are ugly, but this story takes an anti-hunting stand, a rarity in children's books. It's the story of Simon, a snake who is unusually long but is unable to slither. The other snakes aren't very nice to him, as he struggles to do what they do but is too stiff to succeed. One day, some poachers come to capture the snakes. They attempt to escape but are trapped by the river's edge. Simon stretches his long rigid body the river's width, holding on to one tree on each bank of the river while the others escape over his back. Simon is a bona fide hero and in the process the strain has loosened his spine so that now he is able to slither. The entire story is phrased in a tangle of "s"es - in tongue twister fashion.

Fife, Dale. THE LITTLE PARK. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1973, BIP.

When the last empty lot in town is marred by a "for sale" sign, three children are outraged. They see the rabbit and the bees and the other creatures living there and they resent adult condemnation of the land as "empty". To inform the grown-ups, the kids hang signs on the trees identifying the occupants of each. The adults are convinced and agree that some piece of land should be left untouched by developers. So they petition the mayor and the land is preserved as a public park - for the children, and the animals. This inspires one child to put up a new sign : "The little park for little things". This isn't the most attractive book I've seen, but its message is positive and the fact that the children teach the adults the lesson should allow kids to easily identify with the protagonists' viewpoint.

Goffstein, M.B. NATURAL HISTORY. New York: Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1979, BIP.

Very simple water color illustrations and a very simple point to be made, but words and images fuse to boldly teach a fundamental lesson in "humanity". They touch on many of the earth's victims : wildlife, forests, homeless pets, and the elderly. The author also offers us samples of the earth's riches that should be available to all. The book closes with an affirmation of our obligation to protect all life. It touches your soul and makes for an excellent introductory lesson on conservation and man's relationship to the planet and it does so with unpretentious images that a child can comprehend. Unfortunately, one sensitive story cannot be used as a basis for assumptions about an author. Too often animals appear in stories to forward plot lines, not to further an ethical point that the author hopes to consistently make. Witness that M.B. Goffstein has also written a book called Fish For Supper (New York: Dial, 1976, BIP) about the serene satisfaction of catching (killing) one's own meal.

Gordon, Esther and Bernard. ONCE THERE WAS A PASSENGER PIGEON. New York: Henry Z. Walck, 1976, OP.

Though longer than the average picture book, this is very short for a children's nonfiction work. It details the life cycle of passenger pigeons in the United States and it describes their tremendous numbers - over two billion birds could be found in a single flock! It then explains the ingenious ways in which man's hunting destroyed the passenger pigeon with such tactics as setting fire to nest-filled trees so that immature birds were forced to jump to the ground. Man did an efficient job, because the last passenger pigeon in existence, Martha, died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo. (She's in the Smithsonian now.) The book concludes with a well put plea for habitat and wildlife protection laws. The authors have also produced a book on the dodo, There Really Was a Dodo (New York: Henry Z. Walck, 1974, OP).

Knotts, Howard. THE WINTER CAT. New York: Harper and Row, 1972, BIP.

This is a story of a stray cat. We're not told how he ended up a stray, but he appears to have been born a barn cat. The cat fears the children who come out every day to play in the fields. But the air gets colder and the snow gets deeper and eventually the cat allows himself to be touched and to become a part of the children's family and to live in their warm house. We see how a homeless cat might feel in the wintertime and how difficult it is for cats to survive as strays (if they survive at all). Another praiseworthy element in this story is the way that the children react to the cat when they first see him. They call out to him but they are patient as the cat slowly learns to trust them. They do not force themselves on him. This story could easily lead into a discussion of pets abandoned in rural areas.

Howard Knotts has since written The Summer Cat (New York: Harper and Row, 1981, BIP) which is also a very tender story. In it, two children meet a mysterious calico cat who appears at their farmhouse every evening, but always disappears by morning. The little boy becomes so attached to the cat that he hides her in his basement, rather than let her leave at the end of the summer with the woman who owns her. His sister convinces him that he is being unfair to both the cat and the woman (who fears her cat lost). So he returns the cat to the tearful woman; the little boy tries to be tough, but he, too, is fighting back tears.

Kohn, Bernice. ONE SAD DAY. New York: Joseph Okpaku, 1971, BIP.

This book has nothing to do with animals, but it warrants reviewing because it teaches a certain lesson in "humanity" that is even rarer in picture books than "humaneness". This is the only anti-war book that I've seen for preschoolers. The Spots are a gentle people living in pastoral splendor, while the Stripes live in wondrous cities. The peculiar little drawings by Barbara Kohn Isaac depict both cultures. All is bliss until "One sad day,.." when the Stripes attack the Spots to convert them to the Stripe way of life, for the Spots' own good, of course. The two groups annihilate each other. "The children are gone and the flowers are gone." (And in a modern war, the animals would be destroyed along with the humans and plants.) Even the illustrations become bleak, "For war kills." (My only criticisms lie in the animal details of the book : the Spots are shown with fishing poles and grazing herds of beasts.)

Parnall, Peter. THE MOUNTAIN. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971, OP.

The Mountain makes a case for conservation. It is about the fate of a mountain, told in the add-on style of The House That Jack Built. Many forms of plant and animal life flourish on the mountain. The mountain is so beautiful that people want it preserved as a national park. Soon, more and more tourists come to commune with nature until there is no nature left to commune with, just a mountain of trash and picnic tables and parking lots and concession stands. On the final page there is "...a flower...trying to grow on the mountain..." The ending can be viewed as either negative (a flower caught in a hopeless struggle amid a ruined habitat) or positive (the flower symbolizing nature's power to regenerate itself). To me, the flower is a hopeful sign. But either way The Mountain presents a fine lead-in to a discussion of man's effect on the environment. Its narrative and illustrations are simply and elegantly put.

Peter Parnall also wrote Alfalfa Hill, which appears in the "Nice" section of this booklet and his beautiful drawings do grace some of the fine books of Byrd Baylor. However, he has written one book entitled The Great Fish (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973, OP) which is about salmon giving their lives to feed the Indian people. In addition, the author's note in The Mountain states that he "...pursues such hobbies as... breeding fighting chickens."

Peet, Bill. THE GNATS OF KNOTTY PINE. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975, BIP.

The dedication in this book reads : "To my young friends who love toy guns with the hope that you won't grow up to love real guns with real bullets that kill real things."

All of the real animals in Knotty Pine Forest meet to develop a means of avoiding their own doom when hunting season opens, but they lack any solid plans and bicker among themselves. A squirrel tells of a dream in which he turns the tables on the hunters and terrorizes them with a gun, leaving the hunters in tears. Later in the meeting, the animals rebuff Nate, the gnat. When he claims to have a solution, they drive him and his swarm away. But when the hunters arrive and the animals scatter in fear, suddenly a swarm of gnats attack the hunters' heads, driving them off as one frenzied man nearly shoots another. Happily, every gnat survives the battle to join in the formation of a rousing "V".

Peet, Bill. THE WUMP WORLD. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970, BIP.

This is the perfect story for our times, similar to The Mountain, but on a larger scale. The wumps are gentle grass-eating creatures (they resemble moose). Their planet is idyllic until the Pollutians from the planet Pollutus arrive. They come because their own planet is no longer habitable. The wumps have no alternative but to exile themselves in caves beneath the beautiful grass of wump world as the Pollutians (resembling humans very nearly in appearance and precisely in habits) set about to build factories and apartment

buildings and freeways until - surprise - again they cannot breathe the polluted air. So their scouts locate yet another unspoiled planet and the Pollutians zip off to find it. As the story closes, sadly yet hopefully, the wumps cautiously surface to find a decimated land. After trudging miles they discover a small meadow where they can begin again. We are told that, "In time the murky skies would clear up and the rains would wash the scum from the rivers and lakes. The tall buildings would come tumbling down and the freeways would crumble away. And in time the green growth would wind its way up through the rubble. But the Wump World would never be quite the same." We should all take this message to heart before it becomes too late for our own world of acid rain, toxic chemical dumps, and nuclear mishaps.

Bill Peet has written a great many books that are very popular with young readers, but most are not of the caliber of the above two. Farewell To Shady Glade (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966, BIP), dedicated to environmentalist Rachel Carson, also has an ecological theme and it is pretty good, as is Merle the High Flying Squirrel (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974, BIP), about a squirrel fleeing the big city. These are sympathetic toward animal populations, but several of his books have mixed attitudes and some are negative. Chester the Worldly Pig (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965, BIP) is a very strange and negative mix of the cliche of the cute animal running away to join the circus, and the degradation that he finds there. Several other Bill Peet books portray zoos and circuses as wonderfully fun places. Definitely read Bill Peet books before giving them to children. Some are humane models, but others smack of the animals-need-human-love-and-applause-to-be-happy schlock.

Dr. Seuss. THE LORAX. New York: Random House, 1971, BIP.

Everyone loves Dr. Seuss, and while some of his books concern circuses and zoos and harnessed creatures, others teach important lessons for children. The Lorax is not quite human but he seems to be some sort of guardian angel of the trees and animals. He objects to the Once-ler who comes to the unspoiled grove of Truffula Trees and proceeds to chop them down to create a useless item of clothing. Over time, the Once-ler destroys all of the trees and fouls the air and water so that every living creature must leave and hope to find a suitable existence somewhere else. Finally, the Lorax himself goes, leaving a stone shrine bearing an engraved "UNLESS", meaning "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." The Once-ler, hermitic and somewhat repentant, then passes on the last Truffula seed to be planted and guarded in the hopes that the Lorax and the animals may return. Lessons in ecology can be found in unexpected places.

Stone, A. Harris. THE LAST FREE BIRD. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967, OP.

Like The Mountain (by Peter Parnall) and The Wump World (by Bill Peet), the theme here is man's destruction of nature. The birds lived everywhere, in many habitats portrayed in spongy water colors by Sheila Heins. But now the people have "...spilled and spewed and changed the world" and the birds have been overcome in their struggle for survival. Unlike the other two pollution books, this one is entirely pessimistic. The last page is the most somber; a lone bird flies among the outstretched tendrils of factory fumes which spread to engulf the page. I would use this book with a youngster only to discuss pollution and the chances of survival for the earth and its wildlife. It is too overwhelmingly depressing to just hand to a child.

Udry, Janice May. "OH NO, CAT!". New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1976, BIP.

A cat is found on the doorstep with a note attached to him. The family takes him in but the father grows angrier by the page as the cat destroys various articles in the house. (It's played for laughs but one might discuss with a child what items in a house should be removed from a cat's reach because they could pose a danger to him, if ingested.) By the final page dad has accepted that it takes time for an animal to learn how to interact with his environment and the cat stays with the family. The message is a good one for prospective pet owners and the child reading the book could be asked why the cat might have been left on the doorstep initially and if that was the most responsible course of action for the cat's former owners to take. The ultimate question, of course, is why cats and dogs are ever homeless.

Udry, Janice May. WHAT MARY JO WANTED. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1968, OP.

This is an excellent book about a girl who is given the puppy that she's always wanted. But, contrary to most stories about children and puppies, this one stresses the responsibility of pet ownership : feeding, grooming, training, and even an immediate veterinary checkup! Both Mary Jo and puppy are appealing and Mary Jo makes an excellent role model for children with pets. The book is a bit long, more appropriate to first or second graders, and my only criticisms are with Mary Jo's sister keeping a caged bird and with the concept of a pet shop, a place where living creatures are bought and sold as commodities. But since so many kids do have pets, they should learn what Mary Jo knows : that taking care of a pet is a big responsibility and one that the whole family should be prepared for before bringing any animal home. (About the author, she has written a mixed bag of other stories and fishing is one of her hobbies.)

Viorst, Judith. THE TENTH GOOD THING ABOUT BARNEY. New York: Atheneum, 1971, BIP.

This story is very sad but beautifully handled. I still sometimes cry when I read it. A little boy must cope with the death of the family's cat, Barney. His parents help him deal with the loss by discussing what they had loved about Barney, but the child is confused as to what will happen to Barney after his burial. Once he understands that Barney's body will enable the trees and flowers to grow, he sees that even death brings growth and he is better able to accept death as a passage rather than an end. The boy's love of the cat is evident and the reader is encouraged to appreciate animals in life. The subject is treated with great respect and sensitivity. (I must mention, though, that this story contains three references to meat. They are incidental and could easily be deleted in reading the story aloud.

Wegen, Ron. WHERE CAN THE ANIMALS GO? New York: Greenwillow, 1978, BIP.

The animals are running from man; we see the realities of habitat loss and poaching from the perspective of the animals on an African savannah. Through the renderings of the animals' faces we sense their fear and confusion. This is a powerful and eery book. It may be in the nonfiction section of a library but the text is sparse and understandable to young kids. It provides a good opening for a discussion of wildlife in a human-dominated world, as habitat loss and hunting are two of the main reasons for the disappearance of many forms of wildlife from the world.[5]

NICE BOOKS

Allard, Harry. IT'S SO NICE TO HAVE A WOLF AROUND THE HOUSE. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1977, BIP.

This story has a confusing tangle of human/animal relationships. One central character is a human and he keeps nonhumans as pets. He even keeps a fish in a little bowl. Yet the wolf in the title functions as a human character and at times all of the animal characters are clothed for human-like costume parties. This creates an overlap of images : of animals as possessions and animals as humans. But it does not take away from the point that is being made in this enjoyable and humorously illustrated tale.

The plot revolves around an old man and his old pets. The whole household needs caring for. They place an ad that is answered by a wolf who presents himself as a German shepherd. He takes wonderful care of the little group until it is discovered that he is a wolf, and a bank robber to boot! The wolf wails that he had wanted to be good, but that society had always demanded evil of him for being born a wolf. He is so upset that he faints. Now the man and his pets must find the strength, despite their infirmities, to nurse the wolf. After a lengthy recuperation, the wolf turns himself into the authorities, but the judge is convinced of the wolf's integrity and releases him. The man, the dog, the cat, the fish, and of course, the wolf are together to this day, the author tells us. This is a nice twist on standard children's book perceptions of the wolf.

Bornstein, Ruth. LITTLE GORILLA. New York: Seabury Press, 1976, BIP.

This is a book with a short, simple text. Everyone loves the baby gorilla and there is visible joy in the other gorillas' faces as they interact with him. Even animals of other species love him. When he seems to be pulling a lion's tail, the caption tells us that the lion is a willing participant in a game. But as the baby grows, the faces of the other animals reveal apprehension, leading the reader to expect a sad turn of events. The denouement is a pleasant surprise, however, for as he becomes a big gorilla he is still loved by everyone. This is a comforting story for little children who want to be reassured that they are loved. This is also a very good story for children who have been taught that gorillas are King Kongish monsters. In reality, they are gentle beings.[6]

Brenner, Barbara. IF YOU WERE AN ANT... New York: Harper and Row, 1973, OP.

This story is unique among preschool books. It opens with the advice to look at ants close-up. In the accompanying drawing, a boy is observing them outdoors; he is not disturbing them. The reader is then asked to imagine him or herself as an ant : to feel an ant body from the inside, to see the world as an ant does, to know its fears and its strengths. This book gives kids a bit of insight into the society and activities of another life form and identifying with a creature is perhaps a first step toward feeling compassion for it. (I just wish that the ants weren't eating a bologna sandwich on one page.)

Bridgman, Betty. LULLABY FOR EGGS. New York: Macmillan, 1954, OP.

This is an illustrated poem about a tiny and precious cargo riding on the spinning planet earth. That cargo is the promise of new generations : the eggs of a variety of birds lying in nests built from all sorts of materials and attached to many types of structures under a multitude of climatic conditions. This lullaby is suitable for even the youngest of children, with its simple words and dainty pictures by Elizabeth Orton Jones.

Brown, Marc. ARTHUR'S EYES. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979, BIP.

Humorously drawn, Arthur and his schoolmates belong to a number of animal species, though few can be precisely identified. Poor Arthur gets headaches, he can't read the blackboard, and his basketball shots leave much to be desired. All of this, because of his poor eyesight. His new glasses make a tremendous difference until the other kids start poking fun at his "four-eyes". So Arthur attempts to lose the glasses. (In one of these scenes, Arthur is eating cartoonish eggs and sausages, a negative detail, but one that is barely noticeable and unrelated to the plot.)

Without his glasses, Arthur stumbles into the girls' bathroom, creating pandemonium. It is not until he realizes that his teacher uses reading glasses that Arthur's attitude improves, as does his schoolwork. He becomes so admired by his former nemesis, Francine, that she poses for the class picture in glassless "movie star glasses". This story is a lot of fun and it may help kids who are in need of a self-image boost.

Carle, Eric. THE ROOSTER WHO SET OUT TO SEE THE WORLD. New York: Franklin Watts, 1972, OP.

This is a very simple counting book showing many brightly colored animals. It is about a rooster who wants to journey around the world. Hoping for some traveling companions, he invites along everyone that he meets. Two cats, three frogs, etc. join the merry band, until nightfall, that is. When the sky darkens and hunger pangs begin and strange images glow in the shadows, reality sets in. No one had thought to plan for the venture and so, in reverse of the order in which they'd joined the troop, each species decides that it's time to go home. This allows children to subtract numbers and count backwards from five to one until the rooster is alone once more and heading for home. He is soon dozing off into a dream of exotic places.

The rooster is on a perch at the end of the book, but since there is no indication of a chicken coop, I will optimistically assume that he is not on someone's farm. Also, when I use this book with children, I point out that we really can travel and have adventures, as long as we prepare for them, so that kids will not think that those things are only to be dreamed about. I should note that, unfortunately, Eric Carle has also written a counting book about animals shut up in train cars on their way to the zoo. It is 1,2,3 To

The Zoo (New York: Philomel, 1968, BIP).

Carrick, Carol. THE ACCIDENT. New York: Seabury Press, 1976, BIP.

Carol Carrick has written many realistic stories that are illustrated by her husband Donald, and several of them involve a little boy named Christopher. In The Accident, Christopher and his dog, Bodger, are on their way to a boat landing when, suddenly, as Bodger runs across the road, an oncoming truck jerks to a stop. Bodger is dead. Christopher's reactions are easy to identify with. He is angry at the truck driver, and he is frustrated by his parents' lack of anger. He endlessly replays Bodger's death in his mind and familiar spots around the house seem suddenly strange, as they had previously been defined by Bodger's activities. The book concludes with Christopher and his father choosing a fitting stone to mark Bodger's grave.

Lifelike details in both text and illustrations make this an excellent book with which to teach a child the importance of protecting pets from danger. I'm particularly struck by a picture of Christopher absent-mindedly walking along the side of the road while Bodger, having fallen behind, races across the street as the truck approaches. Many people let their animals run free, thinking that nothing can ever happen to them. But often dogs and cats are hit by cars. Pet owners must take the responsibility to prevent these tragedies by insuring the safety of their animals. (There are other dangers presented by the irresponsible care of animals. For example, in another Carrick book, Lost In The Storm (New York: Seabury Press, 1974, BIP), Christopher is so intent on his play that he doesn't notice that Bodger has wandered off along the beach; he is not found until morning. I should mention that meat eating appears in this story.)

The Accident's sequel, The Foundling (New York: Seabury Press, 1977, BIP), takes place several weeks after Bodger's death and Christopher is still trying to adjust to it. His father takes him to an animal shelter, but Christopher insists that he does not want another dog. He believes that it would be unfair to Bodger, though he feels somewhat guilty about the abandoned puppy that he sees in the animal shelter and wonders what its fate will be. There is one puppy that he enjoys playing with near his home, but he'd assumed it belonged to the people next-door. When he learns that this pup is a stray, left behind by vacationers, he has himself a new dog. I like the fact that this book refers to the "summer people" who treat puppies like one more piece of recreational equipment, then abandon them at the summer's end, assuming that someone else will take them in. Thus many animals are left susceptible to starvation, disease, automobile accidents, and other tragedies every year.[7] The puppy in this book is lucky. My only criticism is that, in contrast to the compassion shown for the dogs in these stories, fishing is portrayed as a wholesome sport.

A disappointing book by Donald Carrick is The Deer In The Pasture (New York: Greenwillow, 1976, BIP). For one thing, it is a farm story with cows grazing in fields and confined in barns. The plot revolves around a deer who seeks the company of the cows and, in the process, becomes tame around humans. As hunting season approaches, the farmer decides to move the deer to a remote area, knowing that a tame deer would present an easy target for hunters. (When humans tame a wild creature, its chances for survival in the wild decrease. Wild animals need to know how to survive and whom to fear. They should be left alone unless injured or otherwise in real need of human help. Even then, they must not be tamed, so that they can live independently once they are ready to be released.[8]) So the deer is transported to the woods and shots are fired into the air to frighten the deer and discourage him from following the truck back to the farm. The worst part of this story is the last sentence. "Mr. Wakeman did no hunting that season." As frequently occurs, it is only when a person gets to know an animal as an individual that he feels any compassion toward its species. Worse yet, the implication in the story is that this fondness for the deer will wear off, and by the next season Mr. Wakeman will again enjoy killing deer.

Conford, Ellen. IMPOSSIBLE, POSSUM. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971, BIP.

Artist Rosemary Wells has put wry expressions on the line drawing faces of these possums. Mother possum is a bit of a stereotypical sobbing female, but the three possum siblings are clever and helpful and sometimes spiteful. Poor Randolph is struggling to learn how to hang from a tree branch by his tail like the rest of his family. The situation is comical as he takes many deep breaths and many great falls. His problem is solved by sticking his tail to the branch with sap, until the trees run dry. Then his plight evokes pity and seems hopeless until his sister plays a dirty

trick that really does do the trick. It gives Randolph the confidence that had eluded him. At last he succeeds and a worthwhile lesson looms lightly.

Davis, Alice Vaught. TIMOTHY TURTLE. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1940, BIP.

Timothy Turtle is rather peculiarly drawn, but this is a good story of friends helping each other. Timothy is stuck on his back and many animals gather to aid him until they arrive at the proper solution to get him right side up again. They carry it out a bit roughly, but their hearts are in the right place. This is a tale about caring and cooperation for the raising of compassionate children.

Delton, Judy. TWO GOOD FRIENDS. New York: Crown, 1974, BIP.

This is the story of two friends; each one shares his particular talent where the other is lacking. Duck likes to keep his house very clean, but is left with no time to prepare his food. Bear, on the other hand, spends all of his time cooking, but his house is amok with honey and flour and dirty dishes. When Bear surprises Duck with some rasberry muffins while Duck is surprising Bear by cleaning his house, they rejoice in their friendship. Two Good Friends is humorous and its drawings are amusing. Also, it teaches another lesson in cooperation and friendship.

Falls,C.B. ABC BOOK. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1923, BIP.

This is a basic ABC book for the youngest of readers. Each page shows one animal with the first letter of his name and his full name, for example : "P is for pelican". The pages are large, the woodcuts strong, and the colors bold over large flat areas. It is a good introduction to the alphabet and to animals in natural settings.

Fender,Kay. ODETTE : A BIRD IN PARIS. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978, OP.

A baby bird falls from her nest and lands on an old gentleman's straw hat. When the man finally realizes that she is there, he is unable to locate her nest. Therefore, he raises her and they become great friends, making music together in the subway system of Paris. This book is not on my "Kind" list because of the improper way in which caring for a baby bird is portrayed and, in typical storybook fashion, the bird loves living in a human world. But children can still get a lot out of this book. First of all, the man never captured the little bird, he met her quite by accident and he did try to find her nest in the hopeeof returning her to it. Also, the relationship between man and bird is tender and loving.

When Odette is grown and her bird friends ask her to accompany them south, the old man advises that she go, despite his own loss at her departure. Odette returns in the spring and searches in vain for her old friend. He has died, but now Odette raises her own young in the straw hat that the man had left for her high in a tree. You may get a bit choked up when you read it. I did.

Fenner, Carol. GORILLA, GORILLA. New York: Random House, 1973, BIP.

This book is on my list because it is so unusual. The first half of it is beautiful, as it gives a feeling for the life of a young mountain gorilla as he grows from infancy to adulthood. You can sense his surroundings and participate in his interactions with the others of his clan. Then the gorilla is trapped by humans and transported to a zoo. You experience his fear and disorientation. In the zoo he is listless and a strong statement is being made about the needless capture and exhibition of wild animals. But the book's ending is disappointing. The gorilla adjusts to life in a cage and is given a mate. The smell of the female gorilla stirs old memories for him as he senses a link to his former environment.

The author is noncommittal. She reproduces the yearning in the gorilla for his wild life, yet a mate seems to be the only thing needed to solve his maladjustment. His resultant behavioral displays, in turn, draw her out of her depressed state. Also, the author seems to see the zoo as an entertaining place to spend the day, watching the animals' antics. The first half of this book is fine for reading aloud, but I would only use the entire book if the child is old enough for a discussion of the issues raised by zoos. One last curious note : in the book's blurb about the author, one of her hobbies is listed as "... riding the hunt."

Fisher, Aileen. NOW THAT DAYS ARE COLDER. Glendale, California: Bowmar, 1973, OP.

This nature primer is a lovely book to read aloud and to look at. Through rhyming verses, a variety of animals are seen as they pass the winter months. Some burrow, some head south, some sleep in muddy pond bottoms, some hibernate, and some can still be seen outdoors. Gordon Laite's illustrations fill every page with beautiful details of animals as they really look and live.

Another book by this author is Do Bears Have Mothers, Too? (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973, BIP). It is a popular book about mothers and infants of many species, with a poem on each pair. Some of the rhymes are strained and the swan poem is too pompous and human-oriented, but a couple of the poems make positive comments about maligned species. For example, in "Little Foxes", the kits are warned to quietly remain in the den because there are hunters about. The foxes are depicted as playful animals cautiously waiting until the woods are safe once more.

Freeman, Don. DANDELION. New York: Viking, 1964, BIP.

Dandelion is a lion turned dandy. When he receives an invitation to Jennifer Giraffe's party, he decides that he needs more than the simple haircut that he'd planned on getting. One thing leads to another until Dandelion is turned away at Jennifer's door, unrecognized with his curly coiffured mane and jaunty new clothing. The foppish Dandelion, unsure of what to do, paces about until he is caught in a rainstorm. By the time the sun returns, he has shed his soggy new apparel and lost his curls. He rings the doorbell again and Jennifer exclaims that she and her guests have been awaiting his arrival. When told about their earlier visitor, he confesses and promises to be his simple self from that day forward. This is another good point to impress upon children, that one's worth comes from what you are, not from fancy fashions and cosmetics with which you disguise yourself.

For people concerned about animal suffering, there is another reason to disregard the fashion and cosmetics industries : they are based on the exploitation of animals. Clothing may be made from the furs of animals suffering slow deaths in traps or from the skins of slaughtered sheep, cows, lizards, snakes, etc. Cosmetics commonly include ingredients of animal origin and their irritancy levels are tested on the eyes and bodies of rabbits and guinea pigs. All of that cruelty is committed in the name of some ever changing notion of chic! It is the animals who pay the highest price for "beauty".[9]

Freschet, Berniece. POSSUM BABY. New York: G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1978, BIP.

This picture book is designed for children who are beginning to read on their own. It's the story of a baby possum learning about the world, from his infancy in the pouch, until the day he begins a life independent of his mother. It is a factual nature story presented from the fictional viewpoint of a single young possum. This portrait includes some unpleasant details of possum feeding habits. While a picture of two youthful possums tugging at a small snake may not evoke the tranquil images of nature that we'd like to see, it is a part of reality. My only criticism is that one of artist Jim Arnosky's hobbies is fishing. Possums may need crayfish and such to survive, but humans do not.

Berniece Freschet has written other similar nature stories, such as Black Bear Baby (New York: G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1981, BIP), that can be used to teach small children factual lessons about nature and animal life.

George, Jean Craighead. THE WOUNDED WOLF. New York: Harper and Row, 1978, BIP.

This story is too strong for very young children, but may be fine for grade schoolers. It offers a realistic account of an Arctic wolf who is injured in a caribou hunt. The wolf is the book's protagonist, not its villain, and the author follows his struggle to stay alive amidst the flocking ravens, fox and snowy owl who await his death. The wolf finally manages to reach shelter, where the leader of his pack finds him and feeds him until his strength has returned. This does not present a rosy picture of nature; it portrays the grisly reality of creatures fighting the elements and each other in the battle to survive. The wolf is treated more sympathetically than the other hungry animals are, but after seeing wolves vilified so often, it will do children good to see a story told from the wolf's perspective.

The Wounded Wolf's graphic black and white illustrations are by John Schoenherr, who wrote The Barn (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968, BIP), another harsh account of the realities of nature. (He has exhibited his art at the Bronx Zoo, not the setting most conducive to the respect of wildlife that is apparent in these books.)

Herold, Ann Bixby. THE HELPING DAY. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1980, BIP.

A happy little boy is in a helping mood but no one in his family wants his assistance. He is sent outdoors and there he sees many creatures who could use his help : ants carrying crumbs, worms on a wet sidewalk, a butterfly tangled in an old web, and a young rabbit who is being monitored by a cat. He helps them all. This is a gentle reminder that kindness should be one of the earliest lessons of childhood. (Vegans should be forewarned, though, that at the end of the story the little boy is going to "help" his father get ice cream cones for the family.)

Hoban, Lillian. HARRY'S SONG. New York: Greenwillow, 1980, BIP.

In this simple story, a dreamy-eyed little rabbit named Harry sits motionless as the autumn air grows colder. He is composing a song about the flowers and greens of summer, while all about him animals rush by warning him to hurry up and help his family stockpile supplies for the winter. But he persists in his solitude until the night is dark. Once at home, his siblings, busily sorting grains and twigs and such, think that only Harry has brought home nothing. They are wrong, for he has given them "... the song of a perfect summer day..." to help them through the winter. Another tender story in this booklet that is very similar to this is Frederick by Leo Lionni, one of my favorite picture book authors.

Hoban, Russell. A BABY SISTER FOR FRANCES. New York: Harper and Row, 1964, BIP.

This is a wonderful book for any child who is having difficulty adjusting to the addition of a baby sister or brother to the family. Frances, a badger, feels that the new baby keeps everyone too busy to do anything for her or to have time to spend with her. She "runs away" to a spot under the dining room table, from which she overhears her parents discussing how much they miss her. She comes back, of course, but it's played out sweetly and Lillian Hoban's drawings are lovely.

Frances is a popular character with young children and there are other books about her, but each should be judged separately. For example, Bread And Jam For Frances (New York: Harper and Row, 1964, BIP) is a compendium of carnivorous dishes and Best Friends For Frances (New York: Harper and Row, 1969, BIP) involves the catching of frogs and snakes. In addition, Frances' character can be quite selfish in some stories and her mother and father are locked into traditional roles, so preview her books before taking them home.

Horwitz, Elinor Lander. THE STRANGE STORY OF THE FROG WHO BECAME A PRINCE. New York: Delacorte, 1971, BIP.

This is a funny story that preschoolers and older children enjoy. It offers a delightful twist on the old prince-turned-into-a-frog theme, though the witch in this story admits to having previously turned princes into frogs. Here, however, the witch turns a contented frog into a handsome prince, just for the fun of it. But instead of being grateful, he is displeased with his new "... skin as smooth as a worm..." He wishes to be a frog once more. The witch tells him that she'd said "prince" backwards to effect the spell; therefore to reverse it, they attempt the inverse of a number of words. It is to no avail, so the witch tries to convince him of the marvelous human pleasures that can now be his, such as having a name, wearing clothing, and whistling. He remains doubtful. When she mentions that as a human he will also be able to snap his fingers, it dawns on her that she'd snapped her fingers while saying "prince" backwards. She then proceeds to test a number of words while finger-snapping, turning the disheartened frog into a princess, a centaur, a merman, and finally a frog, to his great relief.

Aside from being entertaining, this story highlights some human traits, the absurdity of which can only be seen by stepping outside of ourselves, as this frog allows us to do. Humans generally see themselves as the pinnacle of life on earth, the best thing to be; but not according to this frog. This frog is happy to be a frog, and that's a good point for children to consider.

Jarrell, Randall. A BAT IS BORN. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978, OP.

This is a lovely poem from a novel entitled The Bat-Poet. Here the poem stands alone in picture book form, a paean to a mother bat and her child. Some of the lines are very nice : "Her baby hangs on tight. Her baby drinks the milk

she makes him in moonlight or starlight, in mid-air. Their single shadow, printed on the moon or fluttering across the stars..." How nice to see a bat as a nurturing mother, rather than as a devious myth-shrouded enemy of humans.

Jaspersohn, William. HOW THE FOREST GREW. New York: Greenwillow, 1980, BIP.

An abandoned farm is slowly turning back into a forest, as nature, unhampered, directs the ever changing cycle of life. Various animal species come and go as the food supply changes with each new generation of forest flora. This environmental drama is beautifully illustrated in black and white by Chuck Eckart. It promotes a respect for nature that can inspire a child to treat all forms of life compassionately and the final section of the book offers suggestions of what to look for and how to behave on a walk through the woods. The last rule states, "Remember : trees are living things. Treat them as such."

Keats, Ezra Jack. OVER IN THE MEADOW. (Text based on the original version by Olive A. Wadsworth.) New York: Four Winds, 1971, OP.

Here is a book of Southern Appalachian counting rhymes of mother animals telling their children to do what comes naturally. For example, there is a firefly family with ten children. "'Shine!' said the mother. 'We shine,' said the ten. So they shone like stars, in the soft, shady glen." These poems can help children learn how to count and can give them a cheerful view of animals who live in the meadow.

Keith, Eros. RRRA-AH. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Bradbury, 1969, BIP.

There are many terrible picture books about frogs and toads that involve children catching them, having frog jumping contests, and doing other things to them that disregard their right to be left alone. I'm glad to say that this book does not fall into that category. Rrra-ah, a free and happy toad, is indeed caught by children and put in a jar, but this story is told primarily from the toad's perspective. His reactions to each new circumstance are recorded in the text. His sorrow is felt as he sees his pond disappearing in the distance, as he is carried away by the children. Once in the house, he is put in the bathtub, lifted by one foot, kept in a matchbox, and fed turtle food. His despair can be felt. After a couple of escape attempts, the children's mother deems that Rrra-ah must go. At least the kids have the sense to return him to the site from which they'd taken him, rather than releasing him in an unfamiliar environment. This toad suffers many cruelties during his encounter with the children, but he is free and happy again by the end of the tale; hopefully children can appreciate his trials and learn not to disturb wildlife.

There are a couple of other picture books that contain positive images of frogs and toads. For example, Tim Tadpole and the Great Bullfrog (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1934, OP) by Marjorie Flack is about a frog's development from a tadpole and it involves no human characters. Toad (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972, OP) by Anne and Harlow Rockwell describes the seasonal cycles of a toad living in a yard. His adventures include escaping from a human and a dog. Oddly though, the Rockwells have also written Olly's Polliwogs (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970, OP) in which a father and son put a batch of frog's eggs into an aquarium so that they can watch them develop into full-grown frogs.

Wildlife is often trapped by kids to be made into pets or for "scientific observation" at home or in school. But how many of these creatures survive the ordeal? Also, how many animals display their normal behaviors when confined under artificial conditions? If we want to teach children to respect nature, observations should be made by viewing wildlife on film or by watching in the wild, without disturbing the living creatures or their habitats. Snatching living beings and depriving them of their freedom, to suit our whims, cannot teach respect for anything.

Kennedy, Richard. THE LOST KINGDOM OF KARNICA. New York: Sierra Club Books/ Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979, BIP.

This is a most unusual fable. It concerns man's treatment of the environment, which determines the survival of all humans and wildlife. (The only specific mention of animals in this book is of horses that are ridden by the foolish people of the kingdom.) The story begins when two farmers, who are digging a well, hit upon a luminous red stone, the edges of which remain buried in the earth. They vow to keep it a secret, but the whole kingdom knows

about it by the following morning. The king is particularly interested; his lust for the precious gem brings many men to the spot to unearth it, but no matter how far around they dig, they cannot reach the edges of the stone. The excavation site radiates to a larger and larger diameter, requiring ever more workers and ever more money for equipment. Farms must be dug up and eventually the castle is destroyed, engulfed by the ever expanding hole. Of course, no one will listen to the wise man who warns that "The stone is the heart of the kingdom,.. And if we remove it, the kingdom will die." Powerless, he sails away from the obsessed nation. Inevitably, the entire country is consumed, right out to the coastline. Therefore, a fleet of ships try to yank the stone free, but havoc results as the stone rolls over, crushing all on the shore and burying every ship in an unrivaled fury, as it sinks into the ocean's depths. The kingdom is no more. Man destroys his own world in his rapacious search for wealth.

This book is published under the "Sierra Club Books for Children" program to teach children about nature and environmental quality. The message hits very hard in this sobering story which is beautifully illustrated by Uri Shulevitz, who has written and illustrated several fine picture books that do not deal with animal themes.

Kessler, Ethel and Leonard. PIG'S ORANGE HOUSE. Champaign, Illinois: Garrard, 1981, BIP.

Some animals gather at Pig's house to help him paint it. After experimenting with the colors (and providing a surreptitious lesson in color mixing), they begin to paint the house orange. When more friends join in, but pick up the wrong paint buckets, Pig's house becomes a colorful original and everyone is happy. Individuality gets a boost in this lighthearted story.

Kirby, Douglas. THE SILVER WOOD. New York: Four Winds, 1967, OP.

There is very little plot to The Silver Wood. It describes a semi-fantasy wood and the woodman living there in total harmony with all its creatures, doing what he can for them. The only specific event occurs when a careless family leaves a smoldering camp fire which touches off a forest fire that must be quelled by the woodman and the rain. The rest of the story relates the seasonal changes for the woodman, the animals, and the wood, "... under a starry sky, at peace." It sounds like a nice place to be and a nice idea to nurture in children.

Kraus, Robert. LEO THE LATE BLOOMER. New York: Windmill, 1971, BIP.

Leo is just that, a late bloomer. Any child who, at some time, feels out of step or dumber than everyone else, will feel a little better after watching Leo the tiger, as he finally learns how to do all of the things that his friends have been doing throughout the story. It's a very simply constructed story, good for the youngest listeners, and the pictures are large and full of splashy colors.

Robert Kraus has written other books about animals that are also illustrated in José Aruego's eye-catching style. Milton the Early Riser (New York: Windmill, 1972, BIP) is just as bright, and funny too. I have more mixed reactions to Whose Mouse Are You? (New York: Macmillan, 1970, BIP). In an effort to reunite his family, this mouse must rescue mom from the cat's mouth and free dad from a trap. The material is handled too cutely, considering that these fates really do befall mice. But the mice are indeed freed and they are together in the end; the little mouse even gets a new baby brother!

A peculiar book that Robert Kraus both wrote and illustrated is Miranda's Beautiful Dream (New York: Harper and Row, 1964, OP), in which a little cat dreams a lovely dream about world harmony. Animals that have traditionally been enemies become friends. But, for me, the dream sours toward the end as the kitten's fairy godmother is a human, which strikes me as a subconscious confirmation of human dominance over animals. Also, this little female cat dreams of marrying a cat prince, perpetuating stereotypical sex roles and aristocratic aspirations. Then, to top it off, the happy couple ride off on a horse. So, even in dreams of equality among animals, a horse is to be sat upon. It's too bad, because the rest of the dream is so nice.

Krauss, Ruth. THE HAPPY DAY. New York: Harper and Row, 1949, BIP.

Here is a celebration of the arrival of spring. There are very few words, but those that exist are imaginatively repetitive and hypnotic, as expressive

woodland creatures wake up in the midst of the snows to discover a flower growing. The animals are eloquent and joyous, the mood captured in beautiful black and white illustrations by Marc Simont. This is a wonderful book and a justifiable Caldecott Medal Runner-Up.

Kumin, Maxine and Sexton, Anne. JOEY AND THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971, OP.

This slightly long picture book is most unusual. In it, a wild brown farm mouse named Joey meets a white caged mouse named Prince, who has come to the farmhouse with a family for the summer. At first suspicious of each other's strange coloring and habits, the two mice soon become close friends. Joey pries the cage door open so that Prince can travel the hidden passageways throughout the old house and meet Joey's extended mouse family; Prince shows Joey around his cage, including his little mirror which is there to keep him from becoming lonely. After a few weeks it's clear that the little boy who owns Prince is watching their nightly activities, but he does not interfere with them. The two mice even visit the boy's pocket occasionally and the boy enjoys it, but places no demands on them.

One night the boy's mother catches Prince by the piano and rigs his cage shut, to prevent any further escapades. Joey does not undo the door for fear of getting the little boy into further trouble with his mother. So the two mice just talk through the bars all night. Then, the night before the family is scheduled to vacate the house, the boy opens the cage, inviting Prince to escape permanently if he wishes, but Prince feels duty bound to remain because he had been a birthday present for the little boy. Back in the city, on the final page, Prince is in his cage, wishing "...summer would hurry. Prince is all alone...he spends a lot of time looking into the mirror." I find the ending extremely sad and I think that it makes a very strong statement about keeping animals caged, as possessions. I think its impact may also reach some children.

Lapp, Eleanor. THE MICE CAME IN EARLY THIS YEAR. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1976, BIP.

This is a book about the changing of the seasons, specifically the coming of winter, as a little boy observes how various living things, including his grandparents, prepare for winter's arrival. Harmony with nature and its seasonal rhythm is mirrored not only in the text but also in the soft water colors by David Cunningham. This gentle harmony speaks up in the way in which the mice are regarded. They have come into the house to escape the growing cold of the outdoors but they are not vermin to be exterminated; here they are seen simply as animals seeking shelter. They do not present some great threat to the household. Real mice would be better off if this novel attitude could become more commonplace.

Lasell, Fen. FLY AWAY GOOSE. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965, OP.

This is another very interesting book. It takes place on a farm where geese, turkeys, ducks, and chickens have their eggs stolen to be eaten by humans, their wings clipped so that they cannot fly away from humans, and their bodies fattened to be slaughtered and eaten by humans. A little girl knows that, in collecting eggs, she is robbing the geese of their young, so she takes the eggs while the pair are away from the nest. She then fantasizes a sequence of events that might transpire if she leaves the egg where it lay. Not wanting the imagined gosling to be raised for slaughter, she will protect him and keep his wings whole so that he can fly. She will warn him about the market and the hunters and on the day that he is scheduled for market, he will fly away to freedom and safety. After this flight of fancy, the girl decides that she will indeed leave the egg and see what really happens.

This book is inconsistent on several counts, primarily because the girl couldn't care less about the cruelties suffered by the other farm animals; her heart goes out only to that single imagined goose. Also, her dream involves a typical pattern : taming an animal and making him completely dependent on her, then expecting him to make a distinction between her and other humans and to leave her when he's threatened by them. In reality, he would not even know how to exist on his own. But this book is interesting for raising an important issue about our exploitive uses of farm animals and perhaps a few children will think about some of the observations made by the little girl.

Lathrop, Dorothy. WHO GOES THERE? New York: Macmillan, 1935, OP.

In this long personalized nature tale, two children pack up a feast to take to the woods for their wild friends. What I like about it is that the animals don't run to the kids and unrealistically sit to dine with them; the kids don't even try to coax the animals into coming near them. To the contrary, they choose a hemlock tree below which they spread out a bounty of seeds, nuts, oats, and vegetables and the branches of which they bedeck in fruit and nuts. Then the children leave. They know that the animals will only come out to eat once they've gone. But luckily snow begins to fall and the children plan to return the next day to see who their guests had been according to the tracks left in the snow. The rest of the story visually and verbally describes what is eaten by whom and details a few squabbles over the spoils.

Leister, Mary. THE SILENT CONCERT. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970, OP.

Richly illustrated by Yoko Matsuhashi, this story tells of a forest community and the music made by its inhabitants - each species using a distinct part of their bodies. For example, the crickets sing with their wings while the frogs have their throaty bubbles. One night several members of the group decide to try to make music by the methods of others in the company. This causes the forest to suddenly fall silent, awakening the owl who sees crickets blowing bubbles, frogs scraping their legs together, a whippoorwill brushing his wings, and other similar sights. The silence frightens them all until the owl begins to hoot and pronounce "Let each one sing his own special song in his own special way,... or there'll be no music at all in our Little Forest home." Children, too, should be encouraged to follow their instincts and develop their own special talents; this story is a clever reminder of that.

Lexau, Joan. CROCODILE AND HEN. New York: Harper and Row, 1969, BIP.

In this African folk tale, a gutsy hen reacts indifferently to a crocodile's intentions of eating her. With each threat she refers to him as "brother", asks not to be consumed, and then goes about her business, repeatedly leaving the crocodile to wander away in confusion. The crocodile is unable to see how he could possibly be related to the hen until a lizard finally explains the mystery : though all creatures may differ in appearance, there are some common links. In this case, it is that all three characters are egg layers. The crocodile is disappointed that he will be unable now to make a meal of the hen, but he accepts the situation and becomes her friend. This improbable tale proposes an important guide line for our interactions with other species, and with other humans : look for what we have in common and treat all with respect.

Lionni, Leo. ALEXANDER AND THE WIND-UP MOUSE. New York: Pantheon, 1969, BIP.

Alexander, an average house mouse, is hated by the family living in the house; they try to get rid of him and they get angry when he sneaks out of his hole for crumbs of food. In contrast, everyone loves the little girl's toy mouse, which can move only when wound up. The two mice meet and become friends, but Alexander wants to become a wind-up toy so that he too will be loved. This reinforces the idea that animals need human affection to be happy. But Alexander learns of a magic lizard who can grant his wish and, as he searches for the purple pebble required by the lizard, he finds that the wind-up mouse is in a box of old toys that are to be thrown out. So, at the last minute, Alexander uses his wish to turn the wind-up mouse into a real mouse. Thus both mice end up alive, happy, and independent of humans.

Leo Lionni has a marvelous way with collage; his illustrations are interesting and they contrast the lives of the two mice well. He has written several animal books, including a couple of other appealing mouse stories. His Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse and Frederick (below) were both Caldecott Honor Books, so he has a wide audience, I'm happy to say.

Lionni, Leo. FREDERICK. New York: Pantheon, 1967, BIP.

While the rest of his mouse family is busy gathering supplies to get them through the winter, Frederick appears to be immobilized and in a daze. When queried by his companions, he claims to be collecting such items as the warmth of the sun and the colors of the meadows. And in the end, Frederick's cache does indeed help to carry the mice through the long, cold winter. Leo Lionni brings his magic touch to this sweet story.

Matsutani, Miyoko. THE FOX WEDDING. New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica Press, 1963. OP.

This is a Japanese folk tale and in Japan, even today, rain falling in sunny skies is referred to as a "fox wedding". In this tale, an old man finds a feeble baby fox whom he nurtures. The baby begins as a real fox kit but somehow grows into an anthropomorphized kimono-clad fox maiden. She and the man share a loving happy life until the day that the fox disappears. The man searches for her with little result until he witnesses a sun shower and a rainbow crossed by the wedding procession of two foxes. The bride, on horseback and lavishly dressed, is his missing friend, but later that evening when a bundle of splendid wedding food is left at the man's door, he understands why she had to leave him.

In this story, as in others in which an orphaned animal is hand raised, the foundling is made into a human-like companion for the kind person. What is good about this story is that the man has the initial compassion to take the kit in, and that he later accepts her decision to live her own life with another fox.

McKee, David. LORD REX. THE LION WHO WISHED. New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1973, OP.

This lion is envious of all the creatures around him. Each happens to possess the magic to grant him one wish. In such a manner he acquires each item that he envies until he has butterfly wings, an elephant trunk, a bird tail, kangaroo hind legs, and a giraffe neck. But, of course, he tires of each new addition in turn. Finally, upon seeing his reflection, he realizes that he is no longer himself and that he looks ridiculous. But never fear, he meets a magic lion.... The lesson is obvious, but not necessarily to preschoolers.

Miklowitz, Gloria. SAVE THAT RACCOON! New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1978, BIP.

A forest fire is spreading, forcing many creatures to flee ahead of it; some ultimately seek refuge in a suburb. This collision of human and natural worlds results in chaos : hungry wildlife finding food wherever they can, eating refuse and killing small pets while learning to cope with automobiles and other human contrivances. (This could lead into a discussion with children of the problems of suburban wildlife or the needs of predators.)

The raccoon, who is the focus of this story, shelters in a garage and later explores a human house. Aside from knocking down clothing, he destroys a small mouse cage, sending its occupant running. The raccoon is soon discovered by the people of the house and, after he is hit and chased out the door, a trap is set for him. Fortunately it is a box trap so he is not hurt when he is caught in it. The story is unclear at this point, as the raccoon and other forest animals are kept caged for days at an unidentified location. The raccoon is too stressed to eat, until at last all of the animals are transported to a forest and set free in territory that will become their new homes. The humans involved are apparently animal rescue workers, quietly doing important work, while never being specifically credited.

Miles, Miska. RABBIT GARDEN. Boston: Little, Brown, 1967. OP.

A little rabbit, racing from the site of bulldozers, finds refuge in a garden. No humans are seen, but corn and bread and vegetables appear by the birdbath daily. As the rabbit grows, he learns about the other animals who come and go and live and feed in the garden, including a cat, who shows up a couple of times. At first so tentative and nervous in exploring the garden, by the end of the book the rabbit feels secure and at home there.

This is a good story about animals coexisting in a refuge provided by caring humans, to counter the destruction of habitat by other humans. While huge wilderness preserves are what we need, individuals can create small havens in their own yards with bird feeders, berry bushes and the like.

Miles, Miska. WHARF RAT. Boston: Little, Brown, 1972, BIP.

This is a very unusual and realistic treatment of an animal subject for young children. It chronicles a day in the life of a rat on a pier. His experiences include eating a bird's egg, gnawing his way into a food warehouse, encountering a dog, and following the smells of food from a restaurant. Returning home, he finds an oil slick in the bay so, in searching for a new shelter, he climbs up the rope of a docked ship. Part way up, a metal disc blocks his progress and he must retrace his steps down the rope. His grip

fails, causing him to land in the oiled waters and struggle up onto the wharf. In this weakened state he is seen by three humans who brand him a "disease carrier" and throw a rock at him; in fear, he stands his ground and shows his teeth until an escape route is found. Then, bounding up the gangplank, he is safely aboard the ship, safe for the time being at least.

No detail is spared in this stark portrayal of the rat's life. It may help children view life from the rat's perspective : his lone struggle to survive, the dangers all around him, the courage to be prepared to bite far larger creatures, if attacked. Maybe Wharf Rat can make kids a bit more sympathetic to the rat who is so vilified by human society.

Miska Miles has written other animal books, but judge each individually. For example, in Otter in the Cove (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974, BIP), a little girl tries to frighten a band of otters into distrusting humans before her father has a chance to destroy them. It treats the otters compassionately, but not so the forms of sea life which are the father's livelihood, the daughter's sport, and the otters' meals.

Miller, Edna. MOUSEKIN'S GOLDEN HOUSE. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964, BIP.

Edna Miller has written a series of books about the character "Mousekin". All are beautifully illustrated, with attention to realistic details. This mouse is obviously derived from the observation of nature because his postures and behaviors are those of a real mouse. Unfortunately, I discovered on the jacket of one Mousekin book that Edna Miller used a live caged model which she set free upon the completion of the book. Couldn't she have drawn from photographs of a mouse's activities in the wild?

In any case, all of the Mousekin books are worth reading. They display a rare sensitivity and a strong affection for the animal's character. The stories subtly reveal Mousekin's perceptions of the world as he learns about different places and animals. My favorite is Mousekin's Golden House which is about his discovery of a jack-o'-lantern. If you'd like to introduce very young children to the subject of reproduction, try Mousekin's Woodland Birthday (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974, BIP). As the facts are related on Mousekin's conception, fetal period, and birth, little pictures of the inside of his mother's womb are shown along side of the larger drawings of the outside world of the parent mice. Later, as the baby Mousekin begins to experience the world, he learns about the young of other creatures. I've never seen anything quite like it.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. THE ALLIGATOR UNDER THE BED. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974, OP.

This is a good bedtime book for any child who's afraid of monsters lurking in the dark. This little girl, Jill, can't sleep because there is an alligator snapping his jaws under her bed. Her parents tell her that she's imagining things, the standard handling of such a situation. But when Jill screams for help anew, Uncle Harry comes to her rescue. He lets Jill exorcise her fears by treating the alligator as if he were real. Together Jill and Uncle Harry convince the alligator that he should be at home with his family. After much struggling they are able to help the alligator out from under the bed and Jill waves as she watches him follow Uncle Harry out the door and down the hall. The illustrations by Jan Hughes are funny and the alligator is not treated as an evil beast.

Nödset, Joan. GO AWAY, DOG. New York: Harper and Row, 1963, BIP.

Here is a little book with neat little drawings. In it, boy meets dog but boy does not like dogs. Slowly, boy begins to fall for dog. The dog here, like most real dogs, is hopelessly playful. He just can't take a hint. He simply wants to play and play and he accepts the boy unquestioningly, even though the boy is unwilling to do the same for him. But the dog's persistence pays off and the boy can't help but love him. The evolution of this relationship is charming. My only criticism is that on the title page we see that the dog is a gift to the boy from his uncle. The pup has been shipped in a crate, not the most wonderful of experiences for an animal, and given as a gift to a family that had not planned on raising a dog.

In reality, this situation is not likely to work out so well. Animals are living beings, not objects to be bought and sold and given as gifts. Suppose that the family disliked dogs? What if the boy hadn't gotten over his apprehensions? What if a family member had an allergy or they just couldn't afford the care of such a pet? Most likely, the recipients of a gift pet would

just be irresponsible pet owners who would either give the minimum required care and attention to their new arrival or would get rid of it. A pet should be chosen only by its prospective owners and only after careful consideration of many factors including : the living space the pet will need, the time its proper care will require, the costs of caring for the pet, and the pet's life span in relation to the household's stability. (For example, will the family move in a year to an apartment that bans pets?) A pet is a living creature and its well-being depends totally on the commitment of its family to its health, safety, and happiness.[10]

Parnall, Peter. ALFALFA HILL. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975, OP.

Peter Parnall's stunning pen and ink illustrations are what stand out in this story of the season's first snow. The animals scurry for some last minute food supplies before the flakes begin to fall. The next day all are silently watching a new world of white. There is no plot, but there are some beautiful images of animals and a snowy hill.

Reid, Barbara and Ewa. THE COBBLER'S REWARD. New York: Macmillan, 1978, BIP.

This Polish folk tale, with outstanding drawings by Charles Mikolaycak, follows several classic formulas. It involves a beautiful maiden held captive in a tower and a gallant young man who is given three impossible tasks by the local witch, which he must complete if he is to save the maiden. This gives the story a traditional sexist flavor, but the young man does not accomplish his goal through physical strength or cunning; he succeeds because of his kindness to animals. You see, on his way to the town to seek work, before having heard about the young woman, he stops several times to assist creatures in need. He helps them out of simple kindness and anticipates no favors in return. In fact, when the animals say that they will come to his aid if ever needed, he thanks them and dismisses their offers. But the animals keep their promises and insure the happy ending that all fairy tales deserve.

The cobbler is likable and unassuming but, being a cobbler, he probably works with leather. However, leather is never mentioned and no animal hides are shown, so this issue needn't be raised in using this book with children. There is one drawing, though, which does include negative animal images; it is of a village market scene in which pigs, a man with a monkey, and kielbasa are shown as backround details. Other than that, this book promotes humaneness.

Roche, P.K. GOOD-BYE, ARNOLD! New York: Dial, 1979, BIP.

This is a humorous story of two mouse brothers. Webster is driven nuts by his pushy older brother, Arnold. So when Arnold spends a week away from home, Webster luxuriates in his absence : playing with Arnold's toys and receiving all of the available parental attention. But after a while the house seems too quiet and, upon Arnold's return, both brothers are glad to have each other to play with once more. It's a nice story for siblings who wish that they could be "only" children.

Schiller, Barbara. THE WHITE RAT'S TALE. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967, OP.

In contrast to the cruelties evident in many fairy tales (see the "Cruel" section of this booklet), this retelling of a medieval French folk tale is a delightful find, incorporating some standard elements and a charming twist ending. In the beginning there is a mythical king and queen and their talented, elegantly dressed "lady rat", but this is not an exploitive tale about a performing animal. Instead, because the king and queen desperately want a real child, they enlist the aid of a Fairy Queen to turn the rat into a human princess. (A couple of objectionable things occur at this point. The Fairy Queen mentions that she's more used to turning children into animals, presumably to punish them. Also, the royal coach is drawn by horses.)

Life for the royal family progresses merrily until the king wants his daughter to marry. She chooses to marry "...the most powerful husband in the whole world ", so on subsequent days the king offers the princess the sun, who gives life to all things; the cloud, who can hide the sun; the wind, who can disperse the clouds; and the mountain, who can stand up to the wind. But the wise princess chooses one who is more powerful than all of these, one who "...gnaws away at the Mountain....In a word, there is the Rat." So, sadly, the king and queen have the princess turned back into a rat whence she marries a fine gray rat and sets up a household on a fine mountain.

Amazingly similar to this is a religiously oriented ancient tale from India. Usha the Mouse-Maiden (New York: Hawthorn, 1969, OP), retold by Mehlli Gobhai, is derived from a set of Indian moral tales, the "Panchatantra", which were printed in Europe soon after movable type was invented. Perhaps the French tale sprang from this.

Sendak, Maurice and Margolis, Matthew. SOME SWELL PUP OR ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT A DOG? New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976, BIP.

This book does not lend itself to being read out loud, as it has a cartoon format with word balloons, but it could be used by a youngster who is learning to read. Though flawed, Some Swell Pup... attempts to make a point about the patience required when dealing with a puppy. One of the authors, Matthew Margolis, directs the National Institute of Dog Training.

In the story, a robed dog figure, a sort of guardian angel for dogs, I suppose, leaves a puppy on the doorstep of two children who want a dog. The children are portrayed in a very unflattering manner, and when they react terribly to the puppy's uninhibited behavior, the draped figure returns to teach them that caring for a puppy requires infinite patience, gentle handling, a soft voice, and, most importantly, unlimited love. He tells the kids that "a normal puppy does everything wrong!" The authors are well-intentioned, but I'm left with the feeling that the kids will destroy the puppy within hours of the wise dog's departure.

However, this book could lead to a discussion of all the questions that prospective pet owners should ask themselves before getting a pet, to be sure that they are choosing the best type of pet for their situation. The points to consider should include : the size of the family's living quarters, the amount of money that can be allotted yearly for pet food, veterinary care, etc., the amount of time available for routine care and training of the pet, the household's stability in relation to the life spans of various pets, allergies in the family, pets already in the house, and the personalities of potential pets. Once an animal comes home, the pet owners must be sure to make the animal's indoor and outdoor environments safe from poisonous household items, electrical cords, sharp objects, and other animals, and traffic, and they should not let it breed, whatever the species. It's hard to find homes for small mammals such as mice and gerbils, whose numbers can quickly get out of hand. Where dogs and cats are concerned, there are already seventy million of them in the United States that are homeless; the humane thing to do is have them spayed or neutered.[11]

Dr. Seuss. YERTLE THE TURTLE AND OTHER STORIES. New York: Random House, 1950, BIP.

The three tales in this volume are amusing, in typical Dr. Seuss fashion. The drawings are silly and the words rhyme outrageously, but the crafty doctor sneaks in some fine lessons for children to grow on. "Gertrude McFuzz" learns a painful lesson on vanity and in "The Big Brag", a rabbit and a bear see the folly of their ways. But I put this book on my list for "Yertle the Turtle". It's a classic about a turtle who tries to rule over more and more of the world by literally stepping on others. He forces the turtles in his pond to form a huge pile, from the top of which he can rule over all he sees. But the king is humbled in the end. "And today the great Yertle, that Marvelous he, is King of the Mud. That is all he can see. And the turtles, of course...all the turtles are free as turtles and, maybe, all creatures should be." You said it, Dr. Seuss!

Simmons, Ellie. MARY, THE MOUSE CHAMPION. New York: David McKay, 1963, OP.

When Mary discovers a mouse in her bedroom, she offers it food. This triggers a battle between Mary and her father over the mice in the house. Mary thinks that they need to be better fed, while her father is busy setting a trap for them. This trap is the type that is designed to kill mice; it snaps with such force that it may virtually decapitate a mouse. Mary sets out a trail of food leading safely around the trap, until her father discovers this subterfuge. Together they catch one mouse who eludes the brutal trap. They release him out of doors, but the father carries the mouse in his hands, not a wise way to handle a wild creature that may bite in fear or may be carrying a disease.

Next, Mary sets up a cozy home for the mice in her doll house so that they won't annoy her father. They do. So a compromise is struck; the doll house is moved out into the yard where the mice will be able to establish a colony in the stone wall and live independently.

Although this traditional, "head of the family" type father has tried to kill the mice, and although Mary is fond of feeding them cheese, a poor diet for mice (and Mary is seen eating bacon and eggs in one picture), compassion still triumphs in the end. If you ever find mice in your house, there are box traps that easily catch them unharmed for release out of doors. That is the simple, humane solution to this common problem.

Steig, William. SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969, BIP.

This Caldecott winner is about Sylvester, a pebble-collecting donkey who discovers a shiny magic stone; he experiments and realizes that his wishes come true whenever he is touching it. When he is seen by a lion he panics and, not knowing how else to escape, he wishes he could turn into a rock. This foils the lion but leaves Sylvester alone, a boulder on a hill, while the special stone lies beyond his reach. The entire town searches for him in vain and months pass before the parent donkeys decide to have a picnic on the hill, in an attempt to lift their depressed spirits. His father picks up the stone, thinking that Sylvester would have enjoyed it, and places it on the boulder for further observation. Upon hearing his parents' voices, Sylvester wishes to be himself again and voilà, he is! After a tearful reunion, they lock the pebble away in a safe. Content to have their son back, they can wish for nothing more at the moment. I like the sentiment that this embodies.

Steiner, Jörg. RABBIT ISLAND. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1978, BIP.

I'm not sure what category to place this book in. I have put it here because it is the first picture book that I've seen about factory farming and it could be used as a point of departure for a discussion of the subject. Originally written in German, and beautifully illustrated by Jörg Müller, it opens with "Factories that produce chocolate are chocolate factories. Factories that make guns are gun factories. But the factory in this story is a rabbit factory. It has no chimney and makes very little noise." I read this expecting a strong statement against the treatment of living animals as if they were pieces of machinery, producing meat and furs. The book does describe some of the rabbits' living conditions : the small cages, conveyor belt food, and slaughter when they've grown fat, but the presentation is rather sanitized.

The plot of the story centers on a young brown rabbit who is brought to the factory and placed in a cage with a large gray rabbit. "Big Gray" tells "Little Brown" that small rabbits are always arriving, while fat ones are always departing in boxes. He explains the rabbits' mythologies as to their fate; they believe that the good rabbits go to a "much better place" where they live happily ever after, protected by huge white rabbits, while the bad are skinned alive by those same "White Watch Rabbits". Little Brown asks if this idyllic place includes the sun and the moon and clover, but Big Gray can no longer remember what these things are, though he feigns wisdom.

The two decide to see if the mythical land really exists, so they gnaw their way into a ventilation duct and escape. Little Brown tries to teach him, but Big Gray is too frightened by all the new sensations of the wild and cannot cope. He believes that a swan that they encounter is a White Watch Rabbit, eager to punish them for running away and soon they are even chased by a crude hunter/fisherman and his dog. So Little Brown helps Big Gray make his way back to the factory, the only existence with which he can feel comfortable. But Little Brown will not stay; he will live free.

It is true that an animal raised in captivity may later be unable to live in the wild, lacking the skills necessary for survival. However, I was very disappointed by the ambiguous stance taken by the author. The reader will have sympathy for Big Gray's paralyzing fear of independence, but he is almost portrayed as being the lucky one for having it so easy in the rabbit factory while the independent Little Brown must be constantly alert to danger. I had really hoped that, in their search for the re-entry spot to the factory, they would stumble onto a slaughter scene, thus jolting Big Gray from his illusions and sending the two to alert the other inmates. Unfortunately, this does not occur. The author's focus is more firmly rooted in the aborted friendship of the two rabbits than in the issues that determine their fates.

Titus, Eve. ANATOLE AND THE PIED PIPER. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979, BIP.

Anatole the mouse is a tad conceited and sexist, and of course he likes cheese, but this book in the Anatole series makes a good point. Twenty-four "schoolmice" are kidnapped by a Parisian flautist who is eager to win a contest for the "... best music about small animals." He intends to compose a "Minuet for Mice" according to the tastes of the imprisoned mice. Anatole's allies, the pigeons, locate the man's garret and Anatole concocts an absurdly complicated scheme to rescue them. It involves pigeons flying a mice orchestra and singers to the man's room to perform the "1812 Overture" while, amid the din, other mice free the children. The flautist then wants to enslave the mouse orchestra, but a memo from Anatole sets him straight. "... I ask - which is more important, music, or God's living creatures? You stole our children and put them in prison. Think, Grissac, think! AREN'T YOU ASHAMED???" (There are a couple of religious references in this story.) Grissac sees the error of his ways and later Anatole and his wife create a ballet about this episode in their exciting lives. This is a very silly plot but freedom is not a silly theme.

Tresselt, Alvin. THE DEAD TREE. New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1972, OP.

Here is the saga of a magnificent century old oak tree and its dignified decline. We learn of many animals' uses of the tree in all stages of its life. There are those who seek food and shelter in the robust tree and there are insects and fungi who eat away at its heart, causing its branches to fall away storm by storm until a harsh wind tears the mighty trunk down from the sky. Still, the animals nurture life with what the tree provides, raising their young in the fallen giant. The insects' work goes on too, along with that of the moss and fungi, eating through the rotting oak until the decay is complete and the ground itself, and thus new trees, are nourished by the tree's remains. Charles Robinson's water color depictions of both plant and animal life lend realistic detail to this study of a tree and make you feel privileged to have such an intimate view of this forest drama.

Wildsmith, Brian. HUNTER AND HIS DOG. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, BIP.

A hunter buys a puppy from a farm (complete with cooped chickens) and trains him to retrieve waterfowl; but each time the dog finds the injured duck, he takes it to an island where he attempts to nurse it back to health. He soon has a collection of such wounded ducks for whom he nightly steals a loaf of the hunter's bread. One night the hunter follows him and, upon seeing the assemblage of ducks, feels remorseful for his shootings. So he takes all of the ducks home (in a cage pulled by a goat), treats them, and releases them when they have all healed. This is a highly unlikely change of heart, but good for children none the less. It can allow them to consider, before they are old enough to hunt, the realities of crippling and killing living creatures.

Wildsmith, Brian. THE LAZY BEAR. New York: Franklin Watts, 1974, OP.

A bear discovers a wagon and enjoys riding down the hill in it but is not fond of pushing it back up to the top of the hill after each trip. To solve this problem, he invites his friends to accompany him and then he intimidates them into repeatedly pushing him up the hill in the cart. They find a way to get even, though, by sending him down the steep side of the hill in the wagon. It seems like a dangerous prank, but the bear lands in a pond unhurt and, even as he is being chastised for being unfair, he is being helped up by those who criticise him. The lazy bear learns his lesson : true friendship means sharing chores as well as sharing pleasures. Incidentally, Brian Wildsmith's vibrant illustrations are definitely one pleasure worth sharing.

Williams, Garth. THE RABBITS' WEDDING. New York: Harper and Row, 1958, BIP.

This is one of my favorite books. The rabbits are very delicately rendered, reflecting the love and friendship that exists between them. When we meet them, the two rabbits play together daily. Yet one is sad because he fears losing the other's company. When they confirm their devotion to each other in a marriage celebration, children are shown the joy that can be had by caring about and sharing life with others. There is also an understated element at work, as the rabbits are of two different colors. This is a gentle tale that will leave you smiling.

CRUEL BOOKS

CATEGORIES TO AVOID

It is a fair assumption that any book which has a circus, zoo, farm, hunting or fishing theme conveys detrimental attitudes toward animals, though it is doubtful that picture books would ever condone the more obviously inhumane aspects of such situations. For example, you are not likely to come across a circus elephant chained by one foot, a farm animal being slaughtered, a fish bleeding from the mouth, a deer dying of gunshot wounds, or caged wildlife exhibiting neurotic behaviors. However, what you are likely to find is far more insidious. Children might react to the blantant cruelties listed above, but when the plight of animals is given scant attention or when animals are depicted as being happy on farms and in zoos and circuses, then both animals and children are done a disservice. Children are comforted by the image of contented animals who are grateful to their owners and blissful in their restrictive homes. So what if they live in unnatural environments, are usually confined, may be harshly trained and handled, could be neglected or abused, and are generally prevented from behaving in a manner normal for their species? So what if they are raised to be butchered and eaten? These issues are never to be raised. Meanwhile, the rosy picture that is spoon-fed to children is one more factor at work in the development of complacent adults who never wonder what choices, or rights, should perhaps belong to the animals themselves.

A distressing number of books fall into the above categories and should be avoided. To make my point, I am presenting one sample here that contains several of the worst elements common in these books. It is The Biggest Bear (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952, BIP), the Caldecott Medal winner by Lynd Ward. According to the book jacket, it is a "....completely engaging picture book....", but my objections will become clearer as you read this section of the booklet. In the book, a boy wants to kill a bear so that he can display the prestigious skin for all the neighbors to see (horror 1), but on the hunt, he finds a bear cub and takes it home with him (horror 2). He raises it and, when grown, the bear annoys the boy's neighbors who want to be rid of it (horror 3); in the process we are also treated to farm and smokehouse scenes. Soon the boy tries abandoning the bear at various locations (horror 4) but the bear always finds his way back, so, alas, the boy sets out for the regrettable task of shooting the bear (horror 5) but both boy and bear become caught in a trap (horror 6 but at least it's not a leg-hold trap). What's the dramatic conclusion to this cheerful little tale? The bear goes to live happily in a zoo (horror 7) where he can be joyously visited by his faithful "friend". This book is thirty years old, but many newer stories are no better.

FAIRY TALES

Most children are aware of the traditional fairy tales, such as Grimms', and have probably been exposed to them in both book and movie form. Unfortunately, they are often populated with sadistic witches and vengeful protagonists. Also they contain stereotypes of evil animals and, at every turn, the use of animals to suit the needs of humans. In some versions of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, for example, the evil queen orders a hunter to kill Snow White and bring her lung and liver to the queen. The hunter is too kind to do it. Instead, though, he murders a boar and carves out its organs. In the context of the tale, this act is condoned as a noble solution to the hunter's dilemma. In Little Red Riding-Hood, predictably, we meet an evil wolf who, in the end of some versions, is "justly" slaughtered. And who can forget the big bad wolf of The Three Little Pigs fame?

Everyone grows up on these dramatic tales, and while it would be nearly impossible to avoid them, parents could review them alone before sharing them with their kids. Then, with their children, parents could explain some of the disturbing elements in the context of the times in which the stories originated. Parents could then encourage their children to create alternative ways in which the characters could have dealt with their problems. This approach is also applicable to other books containing the ubiquitous wolf or fox as villain. It may be worthwhile to talk to kids about the myths concerning these creatures and why they developed. Changing attitudes can also be discussed, as concerned citizens are now fighting to preserve wolves, who have been driven out of most of their native territories.[12]

On a more encouraging note, some obscure folk tales from around the world are charming stories full of humor and compassion, such as the medieval French story, The White Rat's Tale by Barbara Schiller, which appears in the "Nice"

section of this booklet. It's a touching story of young rats in love. In it the rats would rather be rats than the prince and princess that they had the chance to be. Other fairy tales that are favorably reviewed in this booklet are The Cobbler's Reward by Barbara and Ewa Reid, Crocodile and Hen by Joan Lexau, and The Fox Wedding by Miyoko Matsutani.

MOTHER GOOSE

Anyone who remembers the fun of reciting Mother Goose rhymes and who wants to share them with a child should do so very selectively. Some of the poems fit our image of childhood innocence, but many do not. In fact, Mother Goose contains some of the most flagrant debauchery of humans and animals available in children's literature. Here are some passages to build sweet dreams in the heads of children :

The old woman in the shoe had a problem with her children, so she "... whipped them all soundly and put them to bed." And how about "Goosey, goosey, gander"? He met an old man who refused to pray and "... took him by the left leg and threw him down the stairs." Or you might prefer "Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief;" that seems to be enough of a reason for the other man, who "... took up a poker and flung it at his head." Sort of a medieval Three Stooges. Lastly, who could sleep after hearing the poem about the bells of London Town? Here are the last lines : "Here comes a candle to light you to bed, and here comes a chopper to chop off your head."

And now for a little wholesome cruelty to animals. When the three blind mice chased the farmer's wife, what did she do? She did what any well adjusted person would do. She "... cut off their tails with a carving knife..." In a more realistic vein, there's "Bye, baby bunting, daddy's gone-a-hunting, to get a little rabbit's skin, to wrap a baby bunting in." And finally, there is the ever popular "... Pussy's in the well. Who put her in?"[13]

Have I made my point? Some of the rhymes make more sense when you discover their origins. Some of the strange images are symbols for events in European history. For example, the poem "Ring Around the Rosie" may be a reference to the Great Plague, and many other poems originated as political commentaries.[14] Their backgrounds are fascinating but if you plan to use Mother Goose with small children, use her judiciously.

CIRCUSES

The circus has a nostalgic appeal for many people. It conjures up images of children eagerly awaiting its arrival in town, with its old fashioned excitement, brightly colored tents, glittering daredevils, riotous clowns, ... and funny animals. These gay images show up in many children's books. For example, Circus (New York: Macmillan, 1974, BIP), by Jack Prelutsky, portrays the fun of common circus acts, both human and animal. Then there is Circus Fun (Chicago: Follett, 1969, BIP) by Margaret Hillert, about a typical child loving all of the fun and excitement of the circus. There are even fantasy variations, such as Animal Fair (New York: Holiday House, 1981, BIP), in which a little boy is taken by a panda to a fair which is populated by costumed performing animals who are having a wonderful time. The author's note refers to Janet Stevens, who adapted and illustrated this version of the old rhyme, as an "animal lover".

Many people love circus animals, but "animal lover" is not synonymous with animal rightist, for beneath all the sequins and excitement are the seedy offstage realities of circus life. My concern here lies with the performing animals who have become "stars" by force; they have no say in joining the circus. These animals may be bred in zoos or captured in the wild, taken from the surroundings and social groupings to which they are accustomed. Once in the circus, the animals may be hustled on and off stage with prods, given constraining costumes to wear, and made to perform tricks that force them to move in unnatural ways. Elephants in the wild do not normally balance on platforms on their two front feet. But the circus commonly trains them with electric goads or batons that are cloaked in colored ribbons for performances, hiding a spiked hook which might be pressed into a sensitive spot under the elephants' ears to pull them into the required positions. When not on stage amid the chaos, lights, noise, and crowds, the animals spend most of their time confined and frequently in transit from one town to the next, under varying climatic conditions. This confinement produces great stress and may manifest itself in stereotyped behavior patterns, such as pacing or head tossing.[15]

Even if the conditions were not so cruel, is it healthy to degrade animals, to highlight the domination over them by macho whip-cracking lion tamers and other such self-aggrandizing human masters? Is it healthy to de-

grade animals by putting them into ridiculous costumes and forcing them to perform absurd stunts so that we can smugly laugh at them? It certainly isn't healthy for the animals, and it doesn't seem healthy for what it tells us about ourselves, either.

FARMS

Ten Big Farms (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958, BIP) by Dahlov Ipcar is a typical picture book about life down on the farm. The Jordan family wishes to flee the city for a farm in the country, each family member for his or her own reasons. (Little Jimmy Jordan's is that he wants to fish and hunt.) Once they've saved up their money, they travel to visit different types of farms, as they are unsure of the type to choose. They visit a poultry farm, a fruit farm, a pig farm, etc. (They even visit a tobacco farm; there's a noble occupation.) They see a number of animal farms that are portrayed in scenes of pastoral splendor with animals grazing in open fields, but the illustrations also show some animals that are confined.

The Jordans are enamored of all of the farms. On one page we are treated to a montage of pigs juxtaposed with hams, sheep with lamb chops and wool sweaters, and other such combinations as we see the joys that these wonderful farms hold. But a few things are literally left out of the picture. The steps that turn a living animal into a hunk of flesh on the dinner table are conveniently omitted. Perhaps the slaughter of a living creature and the dismemberment of its corpse are rural pleasures that must be experienced to be appreciated. In any case, the Jordans solve their dilemma by buying a run-down little farm that contains every element that they'd hoped for. Everyone is happy, even little Jimmy who, on the final page, is wielding a rifle.

This book is typical in its positive attitude toward the notion of animal farms; there is significance to the fact that children's picture books treat farm animals as happy little creatures only too glad to offer us their bodies for consumption after living a happy life, because that idea is consciously reinforced as a child grows up. Ask children what life is like for a chicken or a cow and they will tell you that the cows graze all day in open fields and the chickens peck about the barnyard. Ask the average adult and you will probably get the same answers.

Even if people have no qualms about the killing as long as the animals suffer no cruelties while alive, they should realize that this is not the case today. Most animals do not live with Rebecca on Sunnybrook Farm; they are intensively raised on "factory farms" to minimize labor and maximize profit. This includes animals that are raised for their eggs. For example, ninety percent of the eggs produced in the United States come from the battery cage system. The chicks are debeaked with hot irons, to prevent the mutual pecking which occurs due to the stress of living in the severe confinement of a twelve by eighteen inch cage. Four birds are held in each cage and they are so overcrowded that, at any given moment, one bird is likely to be pushed under the other three as they compete for space. They "live" like this for fourteen months with the lights shining eighteen hours a day to increase their egg laying. They are then slaughtered, at the rate of one hundred and twenty-eight birds per minute, while dangling by their feet from a conveyor belt. A large poultry plant kills up to a half a million chickens each day.

The production of milk requires that cows regularly bear calves, the males of which may turn up on dinner plates as veal. A veal calf lives chained in a stall with a slatted floor and no bedding. His diet insures a deficiency in iron, inducing the anemia which guarantees tender, desirable white meat. "The calf can barely move - he stands perpetually in one position or else he lies in his cold feces. So he will live out his allotted sixteen weeks of life in darkness, almost motionless in a cage the size of a coffin, and he will never have turned or stretched or run or touched another calf or had a bit of roughage, and when he comes out for slaughter on untried legs, he may fall down."[16]

So please stay away from books such as The Animals of Buttercup Farm (New York: Random House, 1981, BIP) by Judy Dunn, which train children to accept our exploitation of domesticated animals while hiding the brutal realities of farm life and death behind pictures of bucolic bliss. Once that image has been set in childhood, most adults can never allow themselves to even consider that there might be ethical issues raised by their eating habits.

FISHING

Fishing is a little chunk of Americana. Picture Huck Finn or any number of Norman Rockwell scenes of barefoot freckle-faced boys down at the

creek, fishing poles in hand. Fishing also shows up in a lot of children's picture books, as background detail or as the main theme. For example, I Am a Fisherman (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1978, BIP) by Dick Swayne and Peter Savage tells of a yellow-slickered little boy on a fishing boat with some adult friends. He catches a doozy and, as he carries it home, he thinks "What a great day I've had!"

Unfortunately, one thing is left out of such stories : the perspective of the fish. Fish may not be furry or have big brown appealing eyes like puppies, but they are no less alive and they are capable of experiencing pain. With many sensitive nerve endings in their mouths, it must be far from enjoyable to be pierced with a hook, and then to bleed. If they wriggle free, they are left to suffer from the wound, possibly contracting an infection or stress-related disease. And if reeled in? They flap on the shore or the deck of a boat, thrashing and gasping for air as they suffocate.[17] This is wholesome fun for neither catch nor bait.

HUNTING/TRAPPING

There are many children's books about hunting. Sometimes they involve a child who likes to hunt, as in The Biggest Bear, but often, stories are built around children's fantasies of becoming great hunters, as in Shadow Bear (New York: Doubleday, 1981, BIP) by Joan Hiatt Harlow. Here, an Eskimo boy brags that he has frightened away a huge polar bear, when in reality the child and a bear cub have each been frightened away by the other's shadow. There are even a few picture books about adult hunters who are lovable bunglers, such as Roger Duvoisin's The Happy Hunter (New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1961, OP) which masquerades as an anti-hunting book. Every time this hunter is about to shoot an animal, he coughs or sneezes or otherwise causes the animal to flee. Still, he enjoys walking through the woods and polishing his gun, until he becomes too old to manage any longer. The animals then bemoan his absence and go to visit him, brightening his golden years.

Hunting needs to be examined as an issue. If hunting is ethically acceptable, one might still question its frequent appearances in children's books, because safe hunting requires maturity. Hunting accidents seem more likely when the guns are in the hands of children. Also, do we want children to grow up viewing killing as a sport? Should life be taken that lightly? When such a serious subject is portrayed humorously in a story, can we expect children to be sensitive to the suffering of others?

What about the animals? More than sixty million animals are killed in the United States by hunters each year. What becomes of a young animal whose mother has been hauled away on the hood of a car? What of an animal that is shot but not killed, left to face the prolonged pain of a death from starvation, injuries, exposure, or predation? There is comparable suffering for an animal caught in a leg-hold trap; it may literally chew its own foot off in a frantic effort to escape, only to probably later die from gangrene. Hunting and trapping are cruel activities and we must question the justifications for their existence. Do humans need the meat or the furs of the mounted carcasses?

The arguments of hunters and trappers who term themselves "conservationists" should also be questioned from a practical standpoint. If, for example, a deer herd needs thinning, it is because man has affected the habitat to raise the numbers of this game species or because natural predators have been destroyed or driven out by man. Man is the cause of the problem, not the solution. When a wild predator hunts for survival it catches the slowest, weakest animals, leaving the strong to procreate and thus strengthening the herd. But when man hunts with guns, or sets out traps, there is less selectivity. A big, beautiful trophy may be the hunter's objective, weakening the herd's surviving genetic pool, and seven out of ten times a trap may not even catch its target species.[18]

For all of the above reasons I would not give a child any pro-hunting or trapping book. Even in fantasy versions, such as Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go (New York: Atheneum, 1974, BIP) by John Langstaff, the animals are degraded, though not killed. In this old folk song, children trap a number of animals, confine them in some preposterous way and then free them; for example, a bear is put in underwear. In the end, the story states that it's all pretend, but some children may decide to try some of the situations out on the family cat or dog. Also, these books often emphasize the excitement of outwitting and capturing wild animals and they are reprehensible for fostering the desire to control animals. This is contrary to a respect for wildlife, living wild and free, from which both children and animals can benefit.

MEAT

Many children's books include scenes of people eating and meat and dairy products are often the foods involved. There are even a few picture books that are specifically about foods. The Supermarket (New York: Macmillan, 1979, BIP) by Anne and Harlow Rockwell is a trip up and down the aisles, filling up the shopping cart with, among other things, hamburger, chicken, pork chops, and several dairy products; What Happens to a Hamburger (New York; Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970, BIP) by Paul Showers is a slippery journey through the human digestive system; and I Am a Chef (New York: J.P. Lippincott, 1978, BIP) by Dick Swayne and Peter Savage strolls through an open air market and culminates in photographs of a child-chef cutting into a fish, chopping steaks, and plucking a pheasant. I avoid books with references to meat because they add to the barrage of influences that induce children to perceive carnivorism as the only possible diet.

We grow up being told that we need meat protein to make us big and strong, believing that steak is the culinary symbol of affluence, and seeing the four food groups enshrined on our public school walls. But, given that our survival needn't depend on the killing of animals and given the conditions under which animals are raised (as discussed in the farm essay on page 26), we should question the rationale for meat eating. For most people it is simply a habit; meat eaters can't imagine what else there could be to eat. In the supermarket they buy neat cellophane packages of food, rarely making any connection between what is in their mouths, and the animal that it once was, let alone how it got from farm to table. People usually become defensive when faced with the gory facts, yet they must face them. Only when they make that critical connection between the living breathing animal and the decaying flesh sliding down their throats, can they examine their diet objectively. It can be unnerving to consider that a lifelong habit may be ethically unsound, and if people wish to stop their participation in this system, what can be eaten? There are many books available on vegetarian nutrition and cookery that can assist in knowledgeably making the transition to the abundance of plant foods that can provide us with what we need nutritionally.[19]

MENAGERIES

Occasionally you may come across books in which a character accumulates animals and then suddenly gets rid of them. The plots sometimes seem innocuous and the animals might not even be central to them, but these stories reinforce the idea that animals are property, mere objects that we may acquire and dispose of at will. This attitude can contribute to the shocking number of pets that are neglected or abandoned every year, leading to their deaths due to exposure, starvation, illness, and traffic accidents.[20]

Here is one book, typical of the menagerie genre. In Too Much Noise (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967, BIP) by Ann McGovern, an old man complains of the noise caused by his squeaking floor, whistling tea kettle, and other household irritants. The village wise man advises him to bring a number of animals into his house. Of course the level of noise becomes such that, when he releases the animals, the house seems blissful by comparison. Nearly identical to this book is the Yiddish folk tale It Could Always Be Worse (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976, BIP), a Caldecott Honor Book retold by Margot Zemach.

RODEOS

The Brave Cowboy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1959, BIP) by Joan Walsh Anglund is about a little boy in his cowboy suit who imagines himself living the life of a cowboy. He fantasizes all sorts of cowboy adventures such as hunting Indians and buffalos, shooting snakes, and winning rodeos. Kids do still play cowboy and dream of those sexist and racist glories in which animal cruelties also thrive. Rodeos are part of a romanticized nostalgia for the days when America was "untamed". But a rodeo viewed objectively is a series of barbaric displays put on by men whose sense of masculinity is derived from the subjugation of their animal victims. For example, in team roping a steer is lassoed around the head by one man and around the hind legs by another. The animal is then pulled in two opposite directions, possibly tearing ligaments in the process. And what about those brave fellows on the bucking broncos? Who wouldn't react wildly with a bucking strap pulled tightly around their groin? When will people stop paying money to see animals degraded, manipulated and tortured? Perhaps we can hasten the day by teaching our children the distasteful realities of these events rather than the myths.[21]

ZOOS

Zoos are one more example of popular entertainment that exists at the expense of the living beings imprisoned within their walls. They are sometimes disguised under the heading of educational facilities, nobly existing to teach children to appreciate the natural world. But can the observance of wild creatures, stripped of their companions, their natural habitats and their normal behaviors, teach us anything? Rather than teach us about animals, it can teach us about man's haughty determination to control other species who cannot speak out or fight back. Humans confine them, degrade them and make them into "exhibits" for display. Watch the stereotyped movements and the pacing of animals perpetually confined in close sterile quarters; then learn the true lesson of zoos.

Zoos are not happy places for those held captive in them, but you would never believe that if you were to judge by the children's books that are set in zoos. One perverse example is the Caldecott winning The Happy Lion in Africa (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955, OP) by Louise Fatio. In this book from the "Happy Lion" series, the lion loves the zoo so much that when he is kidnapped and he escapes into a ship's hold, but mistakenly gets off in Africa, he is frightened by the animals. "'Truly,' said the lion,.. 'this is not a country for a lion.'" But his troubles are over when he falls asleep at the camp of an old acquaintance who takes him home to the zoo. Ah, a happy ending.

CRUEL BOOKS

SPECIFIC TITLES TO AVOID

Andersen, Hans Christian. GREAT CLAUS AND LITTLE CLAUS. New York: Grove, 1968, OP.

Hans Christian Andersen has written some strange stories, but this one is positively gruesome in its treatment of animals and humans. The two characters in the title are both corrupt men, but only the cunning Little Claus skillfully takes advantage of a variety of situations. He sells the sack holding the hide of his horse which was killed by Great Claus, claiming that it holds a magic troll. When his grandmother dies, he makes a man believe that he is guilty and must compensate Little Claus for the death. In each case, Little Claus earns a tainted fortune but deceiving innocent people. His success prompts Great Claus to kill his own horses and grandmother, in hopes of mimicking Little Claus' feats. Before the story concludes, two people are drowned and Little Claus walks away from the whole affair wealthy and satisfied. This is meant to be a morality tale about greed, but since Little Claus is every bit as greedy as Great Claus, yet he triumphs by exploiting the carnage, I fail to see what possible good children could get from this story.

Balian, Lorna. THE ANIMAL. New York: Abingdon, 1972, BIP.

On cursory examination, this story appears to be cute, with its wispy drawings and irony. In it, a little boy catches an animal but the description of it changes as one child relates it to another, until soon it is imagined to be a wild, green monster. In actuality, the animal is a small, green turtle. I don't find the story cute because it perpetuates the idea of children catching local wildlife and keeping them for pets or for observation. These animals do not deserve to be deprived of their freedom or their environments. Many creatures require specific diets, habitats, and temperatures and will probably not survive the "love" of their captors.[22] I think that this "love" is the worst part of this picture book genre and the idea shows up time after time, in many stories. Children read them and believe that animals just love for us to be their friends and guardians. They do not.

Another book along these lines is A Pocketful of Cricket (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, BIP) by Rebecca Caudill. Aside from spending time under a glass and in a cage, this cricket must spend hours in his "friend's" pocket with a hand pressing on it to keep him quiet. Some friend.

Barton, Byron. BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ. New York: Macmillan, 1973, BIP.

This is meant to be a funny chain reaction story, in which one creature's action upon another causes that one in turn to upset someone else. But some of the links include blantant violence, such as a mule being whacked with a farmer's pitchfork.

The Old Woman and Her Pig (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960, BIP), a folk tale retold by Paul Galdone. is the worst chain reaction story that I've seen. It includes a cat killing a rat who's gnawing a rope that's hanging a butcher who's killing an ox. Later in the sequence there is a stick that's beating a dog who's biting a pig. Those are the exact verbs used in the story. According to the jacket, this is "... a classic for children to love and enjoy." Are there no limits to the sadism that passes for wholesome entertainment?

Bemelmans, Ludwig. MADELINE AND THE BAD HAT. New York: Viking, 1956, BIP.

This book, in the popular Madeline series, is very strange. It's about a little boy who is cruel to animals : he traps and cages wildlife, he builds a guillotine to slaughter chickens, and he captures a cat, which he later releases to be torn apart by dogs. Eventually he learns to be kind, but the subject matter is treated lightly, in comical verses, and the boy does not change his mind due to any ethical revelations. He reforms only because he is injured when one of his pranks backfires.

Then "... the former Barbarian Turned into a Vegetarian", as the book sarcastically puts it. It is fine when he frees his caged animals, but when he begins to free zoo animals the other characters feel that surely he has gone too far, and he must be straightened out. Animals raised in zoos probably could not survive on their own, but all animals do deserve freedom and the idea should not be mocked. (This story is meant to be silly, but the truth is that once a person believes that humans have no right to cause the suffering and death of other living creatures, and once that individual honestly examines his or her own participation in activities that deny other beings their rights, then "extreme" positions such as vegetarianism, become the only logical and ethical ones.)

Burningham, John. WOULD YOU RATHER... New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1978, BIP.

On each page of this book there are several "Would you rather"s for a child to choose from and many of them portray animals as creepy crawlies or aggressors. Animals are also viewed as being predetermined to live in cages. In one passage the choice reads "Would you rather live with... a gerbil in a cage, a fish in a bowl,.." etc. I'd like to know, were the animals ever asked where they'd rather live? Of course not.

Occasionally picture books use the theme of a human being in a cage as a comedic device. The idea of a human in a cage is supposed to be funny because, of course, animals are the ones who belong in cages and humans are the ones who put them there. When the situation is reversed we laugh at the absurdity, rather than taking the opportunity to put ourselves in the caged animal's place and think about what it truly means to be caged, to be deprived of the freedom to move about, to seek food, to seek a mate. Try to imagine yourself in a small cage and imagine that to be your entire universe, forever. Suddenly, it's not so funny.

Carrick, Malcolm. MR. TOD'S TRAP. New York: Harper and Row, 1980, BIP.

This one is all about Mr. Tod, a fox, and his adventures in the pursuit of rabbits. Nature is not kind, foxes do indeed hunt rabbits, and children needn't be sold a Pollyanna version of the world. However, an objective portrayal of nature would not include a cartoon fox in knickers and boots who devises schemes to kill rabbits. Previously, Mr. Tod had built his home over the entrance to a rabbit den; his wife would adeptly grab rabbits as they left the warren. But the rabbits vacate the premises, so Mr. Tod creates some revolutionary ideas for rabbit hunting. For example, he scatters toys about for the rabbits to play with until they fall asleep, but they remind him of his own children, so he cannot kill them. This is the only humane touch in the story. However, Mr. Tod's friend Weasel has no sentimental hesitations and kills his share of bunnies. But poor Mr. Tod fails in all of his subsequent hunting attempts so, in the end, the skillful Mrs. Tod convinces him that she should be the family provider and that he should care for the cubs. Thus everyone will be happy and well-fed.

Flack, Marjorie and Wiese, Kurt. THE STORY ABOUT PING. New York: Viking, 1933, BIP.

Here a group of ducks live on a boat on the Yangtze River, where they catch fish each day and return to the boat each night. To hurry them onto the boat, the boat master hits the last duck aboard every night. Ping does not want to be hit, so when he returns late one night he hides on the river bank. While

on his own, he observes a fisherman's sea birds with tight rings on their necks that prevent them from eating the large fish that they catch and he is caught by a boy who later frees him from his hungry human family. Some element of sympathy is presented in these scenes, but when Ping accepts his punishment and allows himself to be hit in order to rejoin his family on the boat, it is presented as a debt that Ping owes; it is what he must endure for being so naughty.

Gág, Wanda. MILLIONS OF CATS. New York: Coward-McCann, 1928, BIP.

This Newbery Medal runner-up is actually bizarre. An old woman wants a cat so her husband searches for the prettiest one and winds up bringing home "millions of cats". The couple decide that only one may stay, so they must determine which is the prettiest; after all, what other trait could matter? They ask the cats who is the fairest of them all and in the ensuing debacle the cats eat each other up. No, you didn't read that incorrectly; they eat each other because each believes itself to be the most attractive. Finally, only one scraggly little kitten is alive. Feeling ugly, it had not entered the debate. So it stays with the aging couple and grows up to be, you guessed it, the most beautiful cat in the world. (It would appear to be the only cat left in the world.) It is frightening that this is considered to be an adorable story, just right for little children. As with the other older titles reviewed in this section, it remains in print, a library standard. To quote the book jacket, "This enchanting tale... has become a classic." I'd call it a classic in the trivialization of cruelty. Not only is the cannibalism appalling, but whose neglect resulted in millions of hungry cats and kittens to begin with?

Heine, Helme. MR. MILLER THE DOG. New York: Atheneum, 1980, BIP.

Mr. Miller and his dog Murphy share life's daily routines, each feeling that the other's activities must be more interesting than his own, until the day that they trade places. Murphy takes over Mr. Miller's job and Mr. Miller must fetch Murphy's slippers if he hopes to be fed. The author gently mocks the adage about humans and their dogs growing more alike in appearance over time, but at the heart of this story is the role reversal. We are meant to laugh at the pictures of Mr. Miller carrying a slipper in his mouth, begging, and sleeping in a basket. Why can't these images instead make us question our assumptions about the subservient roles that we consistently cast animals in? Why must dogs do tricks to earn our love? Why must elephants prance around under the big top? Why do we laugh at these things? Why do we need to control other animal species and enhance our self-image at their expense? These perpetual degradations make the more blantant cruelties committed against animals easier for us to justify.

Ipcar, Dahlov. THE CAT CAME BACK. (From the song by Henry S. Miller.) New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971, BIP.

I discovered this gem upon overhearing a children's librarian singing it to a group of school children. The tune is given at the front of the book and the story consists of a series of attempts to dispose of a cat, to no avail. To be specific : "The cat came back, we thought she was a goner, but the cat came back ON THE VERY NEXT DAY!" Let me see... the people dump the cat in Alaska; they drop her into the river in a sack; they shoot a cannon at her... (By the way, in each incident the people are drowned or are blown up or whatever.) It's a story that would make animal shelter workers shudder. They receive enough cats and dogs that are abandoned under frequently gruesome conditions. This book, meant to be hilarious, reflects the real attitude of our society, that pets are toys to be discarded when we tire of them.[23] It may, at this moment, be introducing some toddler to that very notion.

Ipcar, Dahlov. I LIKE ANIMALS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, OP.

This book wins the prize for the most graphic example of how we warp children's attitudes toward animals at an early age, and the attitudes displayed here are quite common in people who see themselves as "animal lovers". As evident in the title, this little boy likes animals, so what would he like to do? He wants to run a zoo so that he can ride on the animals' backs and keep them in all sorts of cages. He wants to own a pet store so that he can put a different set of animals into cages. He wants to own a farm so that he can have a third group of animals in confinement, though he doesn't mention why farm animals are kept by humans. Since he's still a little boy all he has

for now are some dogs and cats and an assortment of caged creatures that he's caught in the wild. Moral of the story? Love is... depriving animals of their freedom, caging them, buying, selling and trapping them, killing and eating them. And they say that love is never having to say you're sorry?

Newberry, Clare Turlay. APRIL'S KITTENS. Eau Claire, Wisconsin, E.M. Hale, 1940, BIP.

This Caldecott runner-up sets a terrible example for pet owners. April and her parents live in a "'one-cat' apartment", the one cat being Sheba. Father frequently warns Sheba not to get pregnant. Mind you, he doesn't have her spayed and he apparently lets her roam outside the apartment, yet he's upset when she gives birth to three kittens. He's determined to let only one cat stay, so mother suggests that they keep one kitten and give the others away, along with the grown cat. So the adult cat, who has lived with the family and presumably is attached to them, is to be abandoned in favor of the novelty of a new kitten. There is an unrealistic happy ending as two of the kittens receive new homes and, for unrelated reasons, the family decides to move to a bigger apartment where they will be able to keep both the cat and the third kitten.

April's attraction to the kittens is understandable, given the image that litters of tumbling pups and agile kittens have in our society. Few people can resist happiness in the form of a warm puppy or kitten. So people allow their pets to reproduce for this and other reasons. They may think that a female animal needs to fulfill her nurturing instincts, or that spaying and neutering make pets fat and lazy, but these are myths. They may think that their children should witness the "miracle of birth". While children may enjoy seeing puppies or kittens being born, when they disappear a few weeks later, to be given to strangers or euthanized at a shelter, the children are learning that life is cheap, not that it is a miracle. Some people may even let animals breed for the money to be made in selling the offspring. The profit motive might be valid for purebred animals, but certainly not for the average cat or dog.

When you examine the following statistics it becomes clear that there are no good reasons for letting pets reproduce. People allow their pets to roam and breed, assuming that they will find homes for the resulting puppies and kittens; there are signs everywhere for "free kittens" or "puppies for sale". There simply aren't enough homes to go around, and many of the homes that are found are unsuitable. An animal may be taken on an impulse and then cast aside when the novelty's worn off and the realities of pet ownership have set in, or a pet may be inadequately cared for due to the owner's ignorance or neglect. Those animals that do not receive homes at all are eventually abandoned, to wind up diseased, starved, hit by automobiles, or taken to animal shelters where the overwhelming numbers make the adoption odds for any given animal slim. Frequently the people responsible for the birth of these puppies and kittens try to project their guilt onto the shelter workers by accusing them of being heartless for killing the animals. Sadly, humane workers have no choice but to put many healthy animals "to sleep" in order to keep up with the constant flood of incoming animals. Thirteen million must be destroyed each year as more are constantly being born. Spaying and neutering are the simple solutions to the suffering that results from pet overpopulation. But children grow up with books romanticizing the birth of puppies and kittens and so grow up perpetuating this syndrome.

I teach a humane education course for children in which the above problems are discussed. So many kids talk about their pets having litters, but they don't think about what happens to these animals once they leave their homes. Many children answer the question "What will you do with the puppies?" with "I'll keep them." That response is removed from reality, but is encouraged in books such as Puppies For Keeps (New York: Macmillan, 1943, OP.) by Dorothy Lathrop, in which each of four family members becomes emotionally attached to a particular pup in their dog's litter. Only weeks later do the kids learn that these purebred Pekingese are to be sold. The kids are quite upset, but eventually the family reaches the highly improbable solution of keeping the entire litter! A year later, when they have five adult dogs, will they let each breed and keep all of their puppies too?

If one female dog has a litter of six puppies, and the following year she has another litter while her grown offspring are each responsible for the birth of six puppies that year, there will be forty-nine grown animals by the end of the third year. Due to this exponential growth, by the end of the fifth year there will be twenty-four hundred dogs, all descended from that original female dog. Children should learn to be responsible pet owners and not to add to the seventy million cats and dogs that are currently homeless in the United States![24]

Wildsmith, Brian. THE MILLER, THE BOY AND THE DONKEY. New York: Franklin Watts, 1969, BIP.

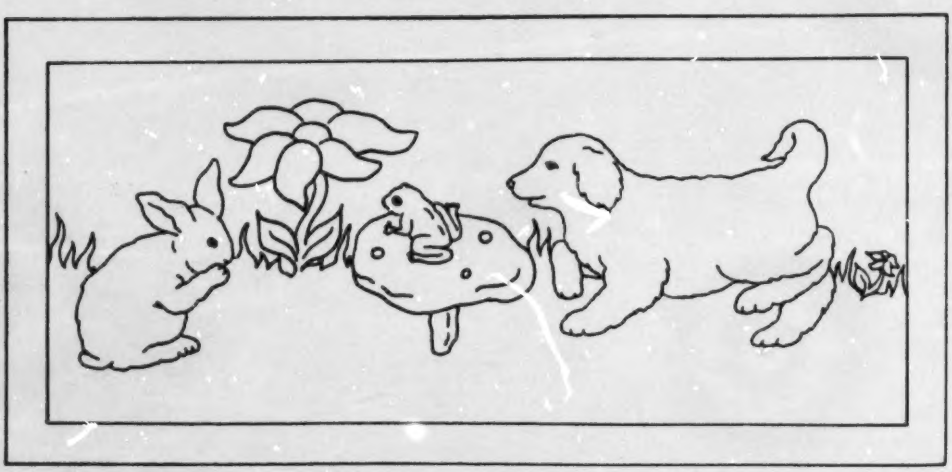
This is the familiar LaFontaine fable about the miller and his son who, while taking their donkey to market, receive different advice from each passerby as to who in the threesome should walk and who should ride. The moral is that you can't please everyone so you should please yourself. My objection is to the "beast of burden" motif. Why should animals do our labors for us : horses plowing fields or pulling buggies, donkeys, oxen, and elephants hauling heavy loads and transporting people? With industrialization, work animals are now far less common in Western society than in the past, but some exist. In the mid-1800s their exploitation was such that it inspired George Angell to found the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, so the cruelties committed against these animals are not to be taken lightly.25 Therefore, why encourage children to think of certain animals as pieces of equipment by reading them such stories?

Yorinks, Arthur. LOUIS THE FISH. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980, BIP.

This is definitely one of the oddest preschool books that you're likely to encounter. Told in flashback, Louis cleans aquariums for a local doctor to escape from the meat in his father's butcher shop. He enjoys the fish immensely, but is soon put to work in his father's store. He inherits the shop and is miserable in it. He becomes obsessed with fish until one night, after a nightmare in which he is attacked by a variety of meats, Louis turns into a salmon. Louis has a novel reaction to meat. The logical reasons for revulsion are never raised, as Louis never thinks of flesh foods as the decaying corpses of animals who live in confinement and died only to satisfy human palates. Louis hates meat solely because he is a third generation butcher. So he becomes a fish and he is taken to Al's pet store to live in an aquarium in which he barely fits, happy at last. This is a typical picture book notion, that animals love to be confined and displayed for human enjoyment. Al tells his patrons, "Look at that face,... I couldn't eat him, so I brought him to the store." If a creature's face doesn't look human, is it easier to eat him? Perhaps if everyone would look into the face of each steer, chicken, pig, lamb, and fish, then they would be slaughtered and eaten no more.

On page 30, is a review of John Burningham's book, Would You Rather... in which he offers a series of choices involving animals. I would like to close this booklet with a "would you rather" of my own. Would you rather have a world full of uncaring people who brutalize creatures who are unable to speak for themselves? Or would you rather strive to increase the sensitivity of humans and the chances for the survival and dignity of all living beings? Tomorrow's answer lies in today's children.

This booklet is one tiny thread in a fabric that is growing worldwide. It is sewn from individuals and organizations that are rising up to stop cruelty to animals : to educate and demonstrate and legislate it out of existence. Join them.



FOOTNOTES

[1]H.A.Rey, Curious George, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941).

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[3]Harry F. Harlow, Learning to Love, (San Francisco: Albion Pub. Co., 1971), p.27.

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[5]Animal Protection Institute of America, "Endangered Species", pamphlet (5894 South Land Park Drive, P.O.Box 22505, Sacramento, California 95822).

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[8]Mae Hickman and Maxine Guy, Care of the Wild Feathered and Furred: A Guide to Wildlife Handling and Care, (Santa Cruz, California: Unity Press, 1973), p.XIV.

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[9]Cynthia A. Branigan, The Fund for Animals, "Furs: Who Really Pays?", pamphlet (140 West 57th St., New York, New York 10019).

Beauty Without Cruelty, "Why Beauty Without Cruelty?", pamphlet (175 West 12th St., New York, New York 10011).

[10]Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, "Paws for Thought", card (350 South Huntington Ave. Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130).

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Walter R. Kilroy, "Humane Forum - Overpopulation: Causes, Cures, and Controversy," Animals vol.110, no.2 (March/April 1977):8.

[12]Michael W. Fox, The Soul of the Wolf, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980), pp.5,106,126.

[13]Marguerite deAngeli, Book of Nursery and Mother Goose Rhymes, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1953), pp.35,70,84,116,125,174,179.

[14]Iona and Peter Opie, The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), pp.4,364-5.

[15]Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, "On With the Circus", handout (Causeway, Horsham, Sussex, RH12 1HG England).

Andy Godwin, Philip Pennefather and Jenny Godwin, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, "Performing Animals", project kit (Education Department, Manor House, Causeway, Horsham, Sussex, RH12 1HG England).

[16]David Nevin, "Scientist Helps Stir New Movement for 'Animal Rights'," Smithsonian vol.11, no.1 (April 1980):51,54,55.

Vic S. Sussman, The Vegetarian Alternative: A Guide to a Healthful and Humane Diet, (Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale Press, 1978), p.151.

[17]Richard Griffiths, "The Cruel Catch," The Beast no.9 (Spring 1981):30-1.

[18]Humane Society of the United States, "Hunted Wildlife. The War on Wildlife", pamphlet (2100 L St. NW, Washington D.C. 20037).

Branigan, The Fund for Animals, "Furs: Who Really Pays?"

[19]Sussman, The Vegetarian Alternative, pp.10,35.

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[22]Judith Star, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, "Exotic Pets: A Disaster Waiting to Happen", pamphlet (350 South Huntington Ave., Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130).

[23]Humane Society of the United States, "Unwanted Animals."

[24]American Humane Association, "The Animal Epidemic of Surplus Cats and Dogs", pamphlet (9725 East Hampden Ave., Denver, Colorado 80231).

Kilroy, "Humane Forum," p.8.

Humane Society of the United States, "Unwanted Animals."

[25]American Humane Education Society, "MSPCA the Open Door", pamphlet (450 Salem End Road, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701).

ADULT READING LIST

Many books are currently available concerning man's relationship to animals and the many forms of exploitation that largely define that relationship. Here are a few titles, all in print, representing various issues of humane concern. Information can also be obtained by writing to any of the organizations whose addresses are given in the footnotes on page 34.

Amory, Cleveland. Man Kind? Our Incredible War on Wildlife. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

Ehrlich, Paul and Anne. Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species. New York: Random House, 1981.

Godlovitch, Stanley and Roslind and Harris, John. Animals, Men and Morals: An Enquiry into the Mal-Treatment of Non-Humans. New York: Grove, 1971.

Hagler, Louise. The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook. Summertown, Tennessee: The Book Publishing Company, 1979.

Hediger, Heini. The Psychology and Behaviour of Animals in Zoos and Circuses. New York: Dover, 1969.

Hickman, Mae and Guy, Maxine. Care of the Wild Feathered and Furred: A Guide to Wildlife Handling and Care. Santa Cruz, California: Unity, 1973.

Lappé, Frances Moore. Diet for a Small Planet: Tenth Anniversary Edition. New York: Ballantine, 1982.

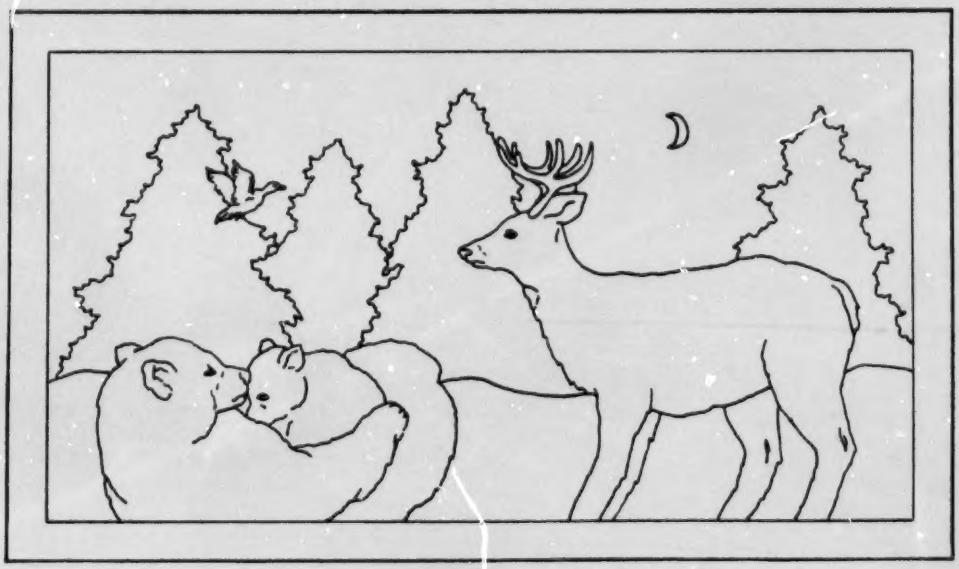
Mason, Jim and Singer, Peter. Animal Factories. New York: Crown, 1980.

Nearing, Helen. Simple Food for the Good Life: An Alternative Cookbook. New York: Delacorte, 1980.

Regan, Tom and Singer, Peter. Animal Rights and Human Obligation. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

Singer, Peter. Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals. New York: Avon, 1975.

Sussman, Vic S. The Vegetarian Alternative: A Guide to a Healthful and Humane Diet. Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale, 1978.



I wish to thank my husband,
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I also want to thank
Michele Giuffre
for her endless hours
of typing.
Thank you.

SUPPLEMENT TO "ANIMALS, KIDS & BOOKS"

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The following books have been reviewed since January of 1983.

KIND BOOKS

King, Clive. THE BIRDS FROM AFRICA. Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980, BIP.

This title is from the British "Starters" series, which matches story books with factual books on the same subjects. Because this story is meant for children who are learning to read, the writing is a bit stilted. The simple premise is that Una, a little girl who is recovering from an illness, is watching a pair of martins rearing a family outside her window. When her mother asks if she'd like a pet bird, Una responds "'I don't want anything in a cage.'" She appreciates the birds in their own element and enjoys observing them without disturbing them, setting an admirable example for children to follow.

Newton, Patricia Montgomery. THE FIVE SPARROWS. New York: Atheneum, 1982, BIP.

This is a Japanese folk tale about a gentle woman who cares for a sparrow with a broken back; when the bird mends, she sets it free. The woman loves the sparrow and hates to see it leave, but she unhesitatingly does what is best for it. As frequently occurs in fairy tales, the woman is more than repaid for her kindness, as one day the sparrow brings her a seed which, when planted, results in a bounty of gourds and rice which she shares with humans and birds alike.

The counterpart to this woman's humaneness is the cruelty of the other humans in the story. The bird had originally been injured by a group of stone-throwing children and the old woman's family relentlessly ridicule her compassion, then greedily share in her resultant good fortune. The worst villain in the story, however, is another elderly woman (with fish in basket) who pelts some sparrows with rocks until she injurs four of them. Her plan is to nurse them in anticipation of a fourfold reward. She receives, instead, poisonous gourds, angry neighbors, and a houseful of flies because true kindness is not motivated by greed and, despite the cruelties that appear in this tale, kindness and generosity is the message.

NICE BOOKS

Asch, Frank. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MOON. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1982, BIP.

In this brightly colored story, a cartoonish (but likeable) bear wants to give the moon a birthday gift. He converses with it and determines that he and it share the same birth date, setting off an innocuous string of events. The bear misconstrues everything that occurs, however, for he does not realize that he has been speaking to the echo of his own voice all along.

Baker, Alan. BENJAMIN'S BOOK. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1982, BIP.

Here is a sweet story about a hamster who creates a tremendous mess of paper, paint, and glue in his attempts to clean his paw print off a page. Benjamin, though drawn realistically, wears spectacles and behaves like a human but, despite this confusion of real and unreal animal portrayal, the book is charming, as is Benjamin.

Bartoli, Jennifer. SNOW ON BEAR'S NOSE. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1976, BIP.

Takeo Ishida's soft illustrations are the highlight of this simple story of an Asiatic black bear cub who wishes to explore her world, rather than settle in for a winter sleep. As the snow falls, she is rescued by her mother.

Another semi-realistic nature tale by this writer/artist team is In a Meadow, Two Hares Hide (Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1978, BIP) about the friendship between two hares as they try to survive among swooping and running predators. The backs of both books give some factual information on their animal subjects.

Berenstain, Stan and Jan. THE BERENSTAIN BEARS GO TO SCHOOL. New York: Random House, 1978, BIP.

These bears are an odd lot. They live as humans, but their human-like home is built in the interior of a tree. I am reviewing them because the series of "Berenstain Bears" books is so popular with kids and because they try to allay many of the fears of the very young, exploring such topics as the dentist and nighttime darkness. This particular book may be useful to anyone with a young child who is apprehensive about starting school, for Sister Bear's worries disappear as she learns of the fun activities that are in store for her in kindergarten. But check each book; Brother Bear sometimes has a fishing pole (barely noticeable in this story).

Berson, Harold. CHARLES AND CLAUDINE. New York: Macmillan, 1980, BIP.

This story, based on a French tale, presents a positive attitude toward being a frog that is seldom seen in modern stories, let alone fairy tales of earlier times. Common fairy tale elements do lurk here, as a handsome young man completes an absurd task with the aid of the supernatural. But the story centers on a baby girl who is turned into a frog by a spiteful witch. In traditional fashion, her family is horrified and wish some human traits for her, but she grows into a mature and happy frog. She later meets the aforementioned gentleman and blissfully moves into his house, a setback for humane principles (along with a donkey cart that appears in two pictures). But, in the end, the young man arranges to have himself turned into a frog, so that he and his true love can live "...happily ever after..." in a bog: a triumph for frogdom.

Bond, Felicia. MARY BETTY LIZZIE McNUTT'S BIRTHDAY. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1983, BIP.

This tiny book is, very simply, about a family of pigs celebrating a birthday. Each pig creates a homemade surprise for the occasion and together they have a great time. That's all there is to it, but the bright illustrations communicate a real sense of joy and togetherness.

Brown, Palmer. HICKORY. New York: Harper and Row, 1978, BIP.

Few picture books possess the charming quality of writing displayed here. The story is very long for a preschool book, there's a bit of sexual stereotyping, and the opening scenes encompass details of mousetraps baited with the flesh foods of farm animals, but Hickory is worth reading under the proper circumstances. Hickory is a bold mouse who leaves his family and their farmhouse for a rugged life in the meadow. His tale is told in chapter form, with ample detail to develop each episode, though realistic images of survival in a harsh world are intermingled with fanciful anthropomorphisms.

The crux of the story is the friendship that develops between Hickory and a grasshopper, and Hickory's determination to not let his friend die with the first frost. Valiantly they struggle to journey south, to warmer climes, but on the closing page it is clear that the end is imminent. This tender scene is very effective.

Though terribly painful, sacrifice for a loved one and the unpreventable loss of a loved one are subjects that children must sometimes deal with and this book may help those children who are experiencing real losses. It can also provide an important lesson for children who need to learn that love is worth the risk of pain. This is not a tale for light reading, but when used by a sensitive adult it might induce a child to explore his or her emotions and fears.

Caldwell, Mary. MORNING, RABBIT, MORNING. New York: Harper and Row, 1982, BIP.

Nearly a wordless picture story, Morning, Rabbit, Morning follows a rabbit on a day of exploration in the meadow. The simplicity of illustrator Ann Schweninger's smiling lagomorph should appeal to the youngest tots.

Fox, Charles Philip. WHEN WINTER COMES. Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1962, OP.

This very old nature book describes how various animals get through the winter. It is good because it uses (black and white) photographs to illustrate each species for, though very young readers see many interpretations of animals, they rarely see photos of the real things.

Freeman, Don. INSPECTOR PECKIT. New York: Viking, 1972, BIP.

This book amuses me because I am partial to pigeons and the hero here is a Parisian detective who happens to be a pigeon. His mission is to locate a little girl's lost knit bag (but since yarn needn't come from wool these days, this needn't be a humane issue). In his quest, Peckit mistakenly ferrets out such objects fitting the description as spaghetti and the puffy tail of a poodle. (A horse cart appears in one picture's background.) Though the inspector's mate, Viv, is rather submissive, Peckit himself is appealingly inept in his detective work while ever putting up a proud front, particularly in front of the cat whom he is wary of.

Ginsburg, Mirra. THE SUN'S ASLEEP BEHIND THE HILL. New York: Greenwillow, 1982, BIP.

Though not specifically about animals, this book speaks of the beauty and tranquility of nature, as brief verses describe night's descent over the landscape. Sun, breeze, leaves, bird, squirrel and child all prepare for rest in one of the most visually stunning picture books I've seen. Paul O. Zelinsky's art work makes this adaptation of an Armenian song memorable.

Hoff, Syd. THE MAN WHO LOVED ANIMALS. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1982, BIP.

The Man Who Loved Animals is a mini-biography of Henry Bergh, the founder of New York's American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It is a good sign to see a book on this subject published for young children, but this particular book is quite disappointing.

Obviously, covering a serious subject in a picture book format requires drastic oversimplification of facts, but here we are told that boredom is Bergh's only motivation for helping animals. As a few of his crusades are chronicled, he is shown using violence against two men driving an animal cart. Most offensive is the portrayal of his feud with P.T. Barnum; unfortunately, it is true that the two men eventually became friends (see Zulma Steele's Angel in Top Hat (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p.235-45.).

Admittedly, some of my criticisms are of Bergh himself and of the mainstream human-oriented humane position which includes the idea that exploitation is fine as long as it is done "kindly". However, I also object to the incredible trivialization of serious issues that this book is guilty of. At one point the author lists Bergh's accomplishments in such a vague and sweeping manner that you would swear that animals now live idyllic lives. For example: "He stopped cruel experiments on animals." That would lead the reader, particularly the young reader, to the assumption that if labs still exist, they must now be happy places. Regrettably, though this type of book is needed to expose children to the concept of responsible behavior toward animals, I feel that The Man Who Loved Animals may do more harm than good.

There is one final ironic note. This book is prefaced with a note on the publisher's series of easy-to-read books, claiming Millions of Cats (a cruel book reviewed on page 31) to be its first "high quality" title. Some auspicious beginning.

Holt, Lockie. ONCE UPON A MOUSE. New York: Gingerbread House, 1979, OP.

Cheese figures prominently in the two tales that make up Once Upon a Mouse, but nonvegans can make use of the lessons that these stories teach. First is the familiar account of "The Country Mouse and the City Mouse", in which the rural cousin learns that it is preferable to eat humbly in safety than to dine on exotic fare amidst the dangers of humans, cats, and traps.

"The Midnight Mice" is more unusual. In it a cat, who is uninterested in catching the mice that roam the restaurant where he resides, is to be turned in for one with a more highly developed killer instinct. To prevent this catastrophe, the cat and mice conspire to pretend to be enemies for the benefit of the chef. The cat presents a "dead" mouse and occasionally chases mice through the kitchen, while after hours the cat and mice dine together in camaraderie.

Since both of these stories involve food, I should state that most of the foods shown are fruits and spices. The only meat to be found is the bottom of a few sausages that hang in the background of one drawing. Overall this is a very pleasant book, with large pages and attractive, colorful illustrations by Amye Rosenberg.

Jones, Rebecca C. THE BIGGEST, MEANEST, UGLIEST DOG IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD. New York: Macmillan, 1982, BIP.

As the title implies, Jonathan has a very low opinion of Pirate, the dog next-door. This little boy sees Pirate's every feature and action in the worst possible light because he is so frightened by him, until one day when he doesn't realize that Pirate is right behind him. With no avenue of escape, Jonathan tosses his ball at the dog in desperation. Of course, Pirate fetches it and bit by bit Pirate's menacing demeanor appears more friendly to Jonathan, as their relationship changes.

Similar to Go Away, Dog (reviewed on page 19), this book displays warmth as the two characters become friends. Also, Pirate's owners act pretty responsibly: walking him on a leash or keeping him in the yard. (Unfortunately though, only half the yard is fenced and Pirate does get loose a couple of times.)

Keller, Beverly. THE BEE SNEEZE. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1982, BIP.

Here is a rather long, involved book that is meant for beginning readers. The story is about a little girl who's stuck at home on a hot, boring day, but eventually her porch attracts a party of food-bearing neighbors. What is interesting from a humane standpoint is that the trigger for many of the events is the little girl's efforts to save a bee who has fallen into her lemonade and to care for her friend's dog for the day. My only complaints are that the girl's parents are grumpy, ice cream is one of the items at the party, and artist Diane Paterson keeps turkeys, according to the note at the back of the book.

Lear, Edward. THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961, OP.

This is a version of the famous poem in which the owl and the pussy-cat set to sea and eventually marry. William Pène Du Bois illustrated this harmless fantasy which is set in a world where all the animals get along with each other.

Leman, Martin. TEN CATS AND THEIR TALES. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981, BIP.

Here is a counting book for cat lovers. Each page matches a lush cat portrait with two lines of a simple poem describing the cat's activities. Please note that the dedication page depicts a fish on a dish and that one cat jumps at a bee, but these may be made up for by the ninth cat, "...whose best friend's a mouse..."

Miller, Edna. MOUSEKIN'S WOODLAND SLEEPERS. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970, BIP.

In this episode of Mousekin's life, his snug nest is blown down from its niche in a tree. Stranded in the snow, Mousekin must quickly find shelter from winter predators and in his search he comes upon many hibernating creatures, thus providing the reader with a lesson in animal behaviors. Eventually Mousekin discovers a bird feeder (which includes suet) and an abandoned birdhouse which suits his needs perfectly. From there he can safely watch the activities of others who are also awake in winter.

Parish, Peggy. THE CATS' BURGLAR. New York: Greenwillow, 1983, BIP.

The main character in this easy-to-read saga is a "cat lady", one of those women whom our society ridicules because they keep lots of cats. But Aunt Emma doesn't care about her neighbors' criticisms and she clearly loves her cats. She is vindicated when a would-be burglar is foiled by the fearless felines who turn him into a sneezing stooge.

On the final pages of the story, neighborhood children bring Aunt Emma yet another stray kitten. No comment is made on the origins of these animals, but Emma gives them a good home; she does not collect them and dump them on a whim.

Severo, Emőke Papp. THE GOOD-HEARTED YOUNGEST BROTHER. Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury, 1981, BIP.

This Hungarian folk tale does not fall neatly into any of my three categories. It would seem, at first glance, to be a real find. Beautifully illustrated by Diane Goode and carrying the theme that kindness to animals is a virtue, it has a plot that is similar to the Polish folk tale The Cobbler's

Reward (reviewed on page 20). But first impressions can be deceiving. After the youngest brother dissuades his elder siblings from shooting doves and loons for food because "'They've never done us any harm.'", he proceeds to join his brothers in a carnivorous feast which magically appears, seemingly as a reward for their previous self-restraint.

There are other books in which meat may appear incidentally and can be overlooked, but here it is a part of the text and the manner in which it is presented angers me because it so typifies the hypocritical stance taken by most meat eaters. They care about cats and dogs, and may even consider hunters to be brutes for shooting forest creatures. But when it comes to something less cuddly, like chickens or pigs, suddenly their compassion runs into a brick wall. If animal suffering is ever to end, people must broaden their sympathies to encompass all animals - not just the cute ones. This book fosters the hypocrisy of meat eating animal lovers, encouraging children to make the distinction between food animals and other animals, and therefore I cannot recommend it.

If you need further reasons not to use this book, other negative elements appear in the story as well, such as the stealing of doves' eggs to find the three with the magic pearls inside, part of the key to breaking a witch's spell. In short, don't be fooled by the title of this book.

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. SAY HELLO, VANESSA. New York: Holiday House, 1979, BIP.

This is a sweet simple story about a little Victorian mouse who is too shy to make any friends, but once she gains the courage to speak out in school, the rest follows naturally. Vanessa is appealing and quickly gains the reader's sympathy. Perhaps her success will encourage shy children of the human persuasion.

Vaughan, Jenny. ZOO FOR SALE. Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980, BIP.

Another book from the British "Starters" series, this one is about some children who steal the animals from a zoo (taking the keys as the zoo keeper eats his carnivorous lunch) and hide them at a school in an effort to prevent the sale of the animals to some shady looking men; the children even comment on the zoo's small cages. It turns out that the animals have been bought by an animal park where they will be kept in spacious natural surroundings. This book only merits the "Nice" category because animals should not be held captive at all but, given that children do go to zoos, at least this story makes a humane plea to them.

Ironically, the "Starters Facts" book that is a companion to this "Starters Stories" entry, seems to have missed the point. Going To the Zoo (no author credited, Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980, BIP) shows the animals in more restrictive settings, relating a few facts on each animal, and even showing kids having donkey rides and drinking soda. It pays lip service to the problem of endangered species, then cites the zoo as a safe haven for animals.

Young, Ed. THE LION AND THE MOUSE. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979, BIP.

Subtly shaded illustrations, juxtaposed with strategically placed bits of text, make this a visually pleasing work. The haughty lion isn't my favorite character, but this familiar Aesop fable still makes a valid point about the relativity of strength and the virtue of compassion, as the mouse frees the netted lion who had previously spared him.

CRUEL BOOKS

There is little point in adding to the list of inhumane children's books, since "Cruel" reviews serve only as examples of the types of books to look out for. However, there is one unusual book that deserves to be singled out of the many cruel books that I have come across since publishing this booklet.

Silverstein, Shel. THE GIVING TREE. New York: Harper and Row, 1964, BIP.

This popular book bills itself as "...a tender story...of the gift of giving..." It is about a tree that loves the young boy who plays among its branches and eats its apples. As the boy grows up he visits the tree infrequently yet the tree gives to him its fruits, its branches, and finally its trunk, leaving nothing but the stump. All of this "giving" makes the tree "happy".

I find this to be a sickening perversity of the concept of love, as the tree masochistically gives and gives and the human takes and takes with no regard for the tree's welfare and not even a thank you for its sacrifice. To me, the warped attitude that is revealed in this story symbolizes man's relationship to nature: rapacious man relentlessly exploits the earth, creating the crisis that we find ourselves in today.